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Chs Lamb

THE AUTHOR OF ELIA.

NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS

THE

WORKS

OF

CHARLES LAMB,

WITH

A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE

AND

FINAL MEMORIALS.

BY

SIR THOMAS NOON TALFOURD,

ONE OF HIS EXECUTORS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

NEW YORK:

HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,

FRANKLIN SQUARE.

1855.

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TO

THE REV. DERWENT COLERIDGE, M.A.,

PRINCIPAL OF ST. MARK'S COLLEGE, CHELSEA,

THIS EDITION OF

THE WORKS OF HIS FATHER'S FRIEND

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

THE PUBLISHER.

PREFACE.

The share of the editor in these volumes can scarcely be regarded too slightly. The successive publications of Lamb's works form almost the only events of his life which can be recorded; and upon these criticism has been nearly exhausted. Little, therefore, was necessary to accompany the letters, except such thread of narrative as might connect them together, and such explanations as might render their allusions generally understood. The reader's gratitude for the pleasure which he will derive from these memorials of one of the most delightful of English writers, is wholly due to his correspondents, who have kindly intrusted the precious relics to the care of the editor, and have permitted them to be given to the world; and to Mr. Moxon, by whose interest and zeal they have been chiefly collected. He may be allowed to express his personal sense of the honour which he has received in such trust from men, some of whom are among the greatest of England's living authors: to Wordsworth, Southey, Manning, Barton, Procter, Gilman, Patmore, Walter Wilson, Field, Robinson, Dyer, Carey, Ainsworth, to Mr. Green, the executor of Coleridge, and to the surviving relatives of Hazlitt. He is also most grateful to Lamb's esteemed schoolfellow, Mr. Le Grice, for supplying an interesting part of his history, and to Mr. Montague and Miss Beetham for the remembered snatches of his conversation which accompany the closing chapter. Of the few additional facts of Lamb's history, the chief have been supplied by Mr. Moxon, in whose welfare he took a most affectionate interest to the close of his life, and who has devoted some beautiful sonnets to his memory.

The recentness of the period of some of the letters has

rendered it necessary to omit many portions of them, in which the humour and beauty are interwoven with personal references, which, although wholly free from anything which, rightly understood, could give pain to any human being, touch on subjects too sacred for public exposure. Some of the personal allusions which have been retained may seem, perhaps, too free to a stranger; but they have been retained only in cases in which the editor is well assured the parties would be rather gratified than displeased at seeing their names connected in lifelike association with one so dear to their memories.

The italics and the capitals are invariably those indicated by the MSS. It is to be regretted that in the printed letters the reader must lose the curious varieties of writing with which the originals abound, and which are scrupulously adapted to the subjects. The letters are usually undated. Where the date occurs it has generally been given; and much trouble has been necessary to assign to many of the letters (the postmarks of which are not legible) their proper place, and perhaps not always with complete success.

Many letters yet remain unpublished, which will further illustrate the character of Mr. Lamb, but which must be reserved for a future time, when the editor hopes to do more justice to his own sense of the genius and the excellences of his friend than it has been possible for him to accomplish in these volumes.

T. N. T.

Russell Square, 26th June, 1837.

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THE

LETTERS

OF

CHARLES LAMB,

WITH

A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE,

BY

THOMAS NOON TALFOURD,
ONE OF HIS EXECUTORS.

TO

MARY ANNE LAMB,

These Letters,

THE MEMORIALS OF MANY YEARS WHICH SHE SPENT WITH TE

WRITER IN UNDIVIDED AFFECTION;

OF THE SORROWS AND THE JOYS SHE SHARED;

OF

THE GENIUS WHICH SHE CHERISHED;

AND OF

THE EXCELLENCE WHICH SHE BEST KNEW,

ARE RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY THE EDITC

LETTERS, &c.,

OF

CHARLES LAMB.

CHAPTER I.

[1775 to 1796.]

Lamb's Parentage, Schooldays, and Youth, to the Commencement of his Correspondence with Coleridge.

CHARLES LAMB was born on the 18th February, 1775, in Crown-office Row, in the Inner Temple, where he spent the first seven years of his life. His parents were in a humble station, but they were endued with sentiments and with manners which might well become the gentlest blood; and fortune, which had denied them wealth, enabled them to bestow on their children some of the happiest intellectual advantages which wealth ever confers. His father, Mr. John Lamb, who came up a little boy from Lincoln, fortunately, both for himself and his master, entered into the service of Mr. Salt, one of the benchers of the Inner Temple, a widower, who, growing old within its precincts, was enabled to appreciate and to reward his devotedness and intelligence; and to whom he became, in the language of his son, "his clerk, his good servant, his dresser, his friend, his flapper, his guide, stopwatch, auditor, treasurer."* Although contented with his lot, and dis-

* Lamb has given characters of his father (under the name of Lovel) and of Mr. Salt in one of the most exquisite of all the Essays of Elia, "The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple." Of Lovel he says, "He was a man of an incorrigible and losing honesty. A good fellow withal, and could smite. In the cause of the oppressed he never considered inequalities, or calculated the number of his opponents. He once wrested a sword out of the hand of a man of quality that had drawn upon him, and pommelled him severely with the hilt of it. The swordsman had offered insult to a female, an occasion upon which no odds against him could have prevented the interference of Lovel. He would stand next day bareheaded to the same person, modestly to excuse his interference; for L. never forgot rank where something better was not concerned. L. was the liveliest little fellow breathing; had a face as gay as Garrick's, whom he was said greatly to resemble; possessed a fine turn for humorous poetry—next to Swift and Prior; moulded heads in clay or plaster

charging its duties with the most patient assiduity, he was not without literary ambition; and, having written some occasional verses to grace the festivities of a benefit society of which he was a member, was encouraged by his brother members to publish, in a thin quarto, "Poetical Pieces on several occasions." This volume contains a lively picture of the life of a lady's footman of the last century; the "History of Joseph," told in well-measured, heroic couplets; and a pleasant piece after the manner of "Gay's Fables," entitled the "Sparrow's Wedding," which was the author's favourite, and which, when he fell into the dotage of age, he delighted to hear Charles read.* His wife was a woman of appearance so matronly and commanding that, according to the recollection of one of Lamb's dearest schoolmates, "she might be taken for a sister of Mrs. Siddons." This excellent couple were blessed with three children, John, Mary, and Charles; John being twelve and Mary ten years older than Charles. John, who is vividly described in the essays of Elia, entitled "My Relations," under the name of James Elia, rose to fill a lucrative office in the South Sea House, and died a few years ago, having to the last fulfilled the affectionate injunction of Charles to "keep the elder brother up in state." Mary (the Bridget of the same essay) still survives, to mourn the severance of a life-long association, as free from every alloy of selfishness, as remarkable for moral beauty, as this world ever witnessed in brother and sister.

of Paris to admiration, by dint of natural genius merely; turned cribbage-boards and such small toys to perfection; took a hand at quadrille or bowls with equal facility; made punch better than any man of his degree in England; had the merriest quips and conceits; and was altogether as brimful of rogueries and inventions as you could desire. He was a brother of the angle, moreover, and just such a free, hearty, honest companion as Mr. Izaak Walton would have chosen to go a fishing with.—*Prose Works*, vol. i., p. 104.

* The following little poem, entitled "A Letter from a Child to its Grandmother," written by Mr. John Lamb for his eldest son, though possessing no merit beyond simplicity of expression, may show the manner in which he endeavoured to discharge his parental duties:—

"Dear Grandam,
Pray to God to bless
Your grandson dear with happiness,
That, as I do advance each year,
I may be taught my God to fear;
My little frame from passion free,
To man's estate from infancy;
From vice, that turns a youth aside,
And to have wisdom for my guide;
That I may neither lie nor swear,
But in the path of virtue steer;
My actions generous, firm, and just,
Be always faithful to my trust;
And thee the Lord will ever bless.
Your grandson dear,
JOHN L——, the Less.

On the 9th of October, 1782, when Charles Lamb had attained the age of seven, he was presented to the school of Christ's Hospital by Timothy Yeates, Esq., governor, as "the son of John Lamb, scrivener, and Elizabeth his wife," and remained a scholar of that noble establishment till he had entered into his fifteenth year. Small of stature, delicate of frame, and constitutionally nervous and timid, he would seem unfitted to encounter the discipline of a school formed to restrain some hundreds of lads in the heart of the metropolis, or to fight his way among them. But the sweetness of his disposition won him favour from all; and although the antique peculiarities of the school tinged his opening imagination, they did not sadden his childhood. One of his schoolfellows, of whose genial qualities he has made affectionate mention in his "Recollections of Christ's Hospital," Charles V. Le Grice, now of Trerieſe, near Penzance, has supplied me with some particulars of his schooldays, for which friends of a later date will be grateful. "Lamb," says Mr. Le Grice, "was an amiable, gentle boy, very sensible, and keenly observing, indulged by his schoolfellows and by his master on account of his infirmity of speech. His countenance was mild; his complexion clear brown, with an expression which might lead you to think that he was of Jewish descent. His eyes were not each of the same colour: one was hazel, the other had specks of gray in the iris, mingled as we see red spots in the bloodstone. His step was plantigrade, which made his walk slow and peculiar, adding to the staid appearance of his figure. I never heard his name mentioned without the addition of Charles, although, as there was no other boy of the name of Lamb, the addition was unnecessary; but there was an implied kindness in it, and it was a proof that his gentle manners excited that kindness.

"His delicate frame and his difficulty of utterance, which was increased by agitation, unfitted him for joining in any boisterous sport. The description which he gives in his 'Recollections of Christ's Hospital' of the habits and feelings of the schoolboy, is a true one in general, but is more particularly a delineation of himself—the feelings were all in his own heart—the portrait was his own: 'While others were all fire and play, he stole along with all the self-concentration of a young monk.' These habits and feelings were awakened and cherished in him by peculiar circumstances; he had been born and bred in the Inner Temple; and his parents continued to reside there while he was at school, so that he passed from cloister to cloister, and this was all the change his young mind ever knew. On every half-holyday (and there

were two in the week) in ten minutes he was in the gardens, on the terrace, or at the fountain of the Temple: here was his home; here his recreation; and the influence they had on his infant mind is vividly shown in his description of the old Benchers. He says, 'I was born and passed the first seven years of my life in the Temple;' he might have added, that here he passed a great portion of the second seven years of his life, a portion which mixed itself with all his habits and enjoyments, and gave a bias to the whole. Here he found a happy home, affectionate parents, and a sister who watched over him to the latest hour of his existence (God be with her!) with the tenderest solicitude; and here he had access to the library of Mr. Salt, one of the benchers, to whose memory his pen has given in return for this and greater favours—I do not think it extravagant to say—immortality. To use his own language, 'Here he was tumbled into a spacious closet of good old English reading, where he browsed at will upon that fair and wholesome pasturage.' He applied these words to his sister; but there is no doubt they 'browsed' together; they had walked hand in hand from a time 'extending beyond the period of their memory.'"

When Lamb left school, he was in the lower division of the second class—which, in the language of the school, is termed "being in Greek, but not Deputy Grecian." He had read Virgil, Sallust, Terence, selections from Lucian's Dialogues, and Xenophon; and had evinced considerable skill in the niceties of Latin composition, both in prose and verse. His docility and aptitude for the attainment of classical knowledge would have ensured him an exhibition; but to this the impediment in his speech proved an insuperable obstacle. The exhibitions were given under the implied, if not expressed condition of entering into the church; the whole course of education was preparatory to that end; and, therefore, Lamb, who was unfitted by nature for the clerical profession, was not adopted into the class which led to it, and left school to pursue the uncongenial labour of the "desk's dull wood." To this apparently hard lot he submitted with cheerfulness, and saw his schoolfellows of his own standing depart, one after another, for the University, without a murmur. This acquiescence in his different fortune must have been a hard trial for the sweetness of his disposition; as he always, in after life, regarded the ancient seats of learning with the fondness of one who had been hardly divorced from them. He delighted, when other duties did not hinder, to pass his vacations in their neighbourhood, and indulge in that fancied association with them which he has so beautifully

mirrored in his "Sonnets written at Cambridge."* What worldly success can, indeed, ever compensate for the want of timely nurture beneath the shade of one of these venerable institutions; for the sense of antiquity shading, not checking, the joyous impulses of opening manhood; for the refinement and the grace there interfused into the long labour of ambitious study; for young friendships consecrated by the associations of long past time; and for liberal emulation, crowned by successes restrained from ungenerous and selfish pride by palpable symbols of the genius and the learning of ages?

On 23d November, 1789, Lamb finally left Christ's Hospital for the abode of his parents, who still resided in the Temple. At first he was employed in the South Sea House, under his brother John; but, on 5th of April, 1792, he obtained an appointment in the accountant's office of the East India Company. His salary, though then small, was a welcome addition to the scanty means of his parents; who now were unable, by their own exertions, to increase it, his mother being in ill health, which confined her to her bed, and his father sinking into dotage. On their comfort, however, this, and, what was more precious to him, his little leisure, were freely bestowed; and his recreations were confined to a delightful visit to the two shilling gallery of the theatre, in company with his sister, and an occasional supper with some of his schoolmates, when in town, from Cambridge. On one of these latter occasions he obtained the appellation of *Guy*, by which he was always called among them; but of which few of his late friends heard till after his death. "In the first year of his clerkship," says Mr. Le Grice, in the communication with which he favoured me, "Lamb spent the evening of the 5th November with some of his former schoolfellows, who, being amused with the particularly large and flapping brim of his round hat, pinned it up on the sides in the form of a cocked-hat. Lamb made no alteration in it,

* I was not train'd in academic bowers,
And to those learned streams I nothing owe
Which copious from those fair twin founts do flow;
Mine have been anything but studious hours.
Yet can I fancy wandering mid thy towers
Myself, a nursling, Granta, of thy lap;
My brow seems tightening with the doctor's cap,
And I walk gown'd: feel unusual powers.
Strange forms of logic clothe my admiring speech;
Old Rama's ghost is busy at my brain;
And my scull teems with notions infinite.
Be still, ye reed of Comus, while I teach
Truths which transcend the searching schoolman's vein,
And half had stagger'd that stout Stagyrite!

but walked home in his usual sauntering gait towards the Temple. As he was going down Ludgate-hill, some gay young men, who seemed not to have passed the London Tavern without resting, exclaimed, 'the veritable Guy!—no man of straw!' and with this exclamation they took him up, making a chair with their arms, carried him, seated him on a post in St. Paul's churchyard, and there left him. This story Lamb told so seriously that the truth of it was never doubted. He wore his three-cornered hat many evenings, and retained the name of Guy ever after. Like Nym, he quietly sympathized in the fun, and seemed to say, 'that was the humour of it.' A clergyman of the city lately wrote to me, 'I have no recollection of Lamb. There was a gentleman called Guy, to whom you once introduced me, and with whom I have occasionally interchanged nods for more than thirty years; but how is it that I never met Mr. Lamb? If I was ever introduced to him, I wonder that we never came in contact during my residence for ten years in Edmonton.' Imagine this gentleman's surprise when I informed him that his nods to Mr. Guy had been constantly reciprocated by Mr. Lamb!"

During these years Lamb's most frequent companion was James White, or rather Jem White, as he always called him. Lamb always insisted that for hearty joyous humour, tinged with Shakspearian fancy, Jem never had an equal. "Jem White!" said he to Mr. Le Grice, when they met for the last time, after many years' absence, at the Bell at Edmonton, in June, 1833, "there never was his like! We never shall see such days as those in which Jem flourished!" All that now remains of Jem is the celebration of the suppers which he gave the young chimney-sweepers, in the Elia of his friend, and a thin duodecimo volume, which he published in 1796, under the title of the "Letters of Sir John Falstaff, with a dedication (printed in black letter) to Master Samuel Irelaunde," which those who knew Lamb at the time believed to be his. "White's Letters," said Lamb, in a letter to a friend about this time, "are near publication. His frontispiece is a good conceit; Sir John learning to dance to please Madame Page, in dress of doublet, &c., from the upper half, and modern pantaloons, with shoes of the eighteenth century, from the lower half, and the whole work is full of goodly quips and rare fancies, 'all deeply masked like hoar antiquity'—much superior to Dr. Kendrick's 'Falstaff's Wedding.'" The work was neglected, although Lamb exerted all the influence he subsequently acquired with more popular writers to obtain for it favourable notices, as will be seen from various passages in his letters. He stuck, however,

gallantly by his favourite protégé; and even when he could little afford to disburse sixpence, he made a point of buying a copy of the book whenever he discovered one amid the refuse of a bookseller's stall, and would present it to a friend in the hope of making a convert. He gave me one of these copies soon after I became acquainted with him, stating that he had purchased it in the morning for sixpence, and assuring me I should enjoy a rare treat in the perusal; but, if I must confess the truth, the mask of quaintness was so closely worn, that it nearly concealed the humour. To Lamb it was, doubtless, vivified by the eye and voice of his old boon companion, forming to him an undying commentary, without which it was comparatively spiritless. Alas! how many even of his own most delicate fancies, rich as they are in feeling and in wisdom, will be lost to those who have not present to them the sweet broken accents, and the half playful, half melancholy smile of the writer!

But if Jem White was the companion of his lighter moods, the friend of his serious thoughts was a person of far nobler powers—Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It was his good fortune to be the schoolfellow of that extraordinary man; and if no particular intimacy had been formed between them at Christ's Hospital, a foundation was there laid for a friendship to which the world is probably indebted for all that Lamb has added to its sources of pleasure. Junior to Coleridge by two years, and far inferior to him in all scholastic acquirements, Lamb had listend to the rich discourse of "the inspired charity-boy" with a wondering delight, pure from all envy, and, it may be, enhanced by his sense of his own feebleness and difficulty at expression. While Coleridge remained at the University they met occasionally on his visits to London; and when he left it, and came to town, full of mantling hopes and glorious schemes, Lamb became his admiring disciple. The scene of these happy meetings was a little public-house, called the Salutation and Cat, in the neighbourhood of Smithfield, where they used to sup, and remain long after they had "heard the chimes of midnight." There they discoursed of Bowles, who was the god of Coleridge's poetical idolatry, and of Burns and Cowper, who, of recent poets, in that season of comparative barrenness, had made the deepest impression on Lamb. There Coleridge talked of "Fate, freewill, foreknowledge absolute" to one who desired "to find no end" of the golden maze; and there he recited his early poems with that deep sweetness of intonation which sunk into the heart of his hearer. To these meetings Lamb was accustomed, at all periods of his life, to revert as the season when his finer intellects were quickened

into action. Shortly after they had terminated, with Coleridge's departure for London, he thus recalled them in a letter.* "When I read in your little volume the effusion you call 'the Sigh,' I think I hear you again. I imagine to myself the little smoky room at the Salutation and Cat, where we sat together through the winter nights beguiling the cares of life with poetry." This was early in 1796; and in 1818. when dedicating his works, then first collected, to his earliest friend, he thus spoke of the same meetings. "Some of the sonnets, which shall be carelessly turned over by the general reader, may happily awaken in you remembrances which I should be sorry to doubt are totally extinct—the memory 'of summer days and of delightful years,' even so far back as those old suppers at our old inn—when life was fresh, and topics exhaustless—and you first kindled in me, if not the power, yet the love of poetry, and beauty, and kindliness." And so he talked of these unforgotten hours in that short interval during which death divided them!

The warmth of Coleridge's friendship supplied the quickening impulse to Lamb's genius; but the germe unfolding all its nice peculiarities lay ready for the influence, and expanded into forms and hues of its own. Lamb's earliest poetry was not a faint reflection of Coleridge's, such as the young lustre of original genius may cast on a polished and sensitive mind, to glow and tremble for a season, but was streaked with delicate yet distinct traits, which proved it an emanation from within. There was, indeed, little resemblance between the two, except in the affection which they bore towards each other. Coleridge's mind, not laden as yet with the spoils of all systems and of all times, glowed with the ardour of uncontrollable purpose, and thirsted for glorious achievement and universal knowledge. The imagination, which afterward struggled gloriously, but perhaps vainly, to overmaster the stupendous clouds of German philosophies, breaking them into huge masses, and tinting them with heavenly hues, then shone through the simple articles of Unitarian faith, the graceful architecture of Hartley's theory, and the well-compacted chain by which Priestley and Edwards seemed to bind all things in necessary connexion, as through transparencies of thought; and, finding no opposition worthy of its activity in this poor foreground of the mind, opened for itself a bright succession of fairy visions, which it sought to realize on earth. In its

* This, with other passages I have interwoven with my own slender thread of narration, are from lettters which I have thought either too personal for entire publication at present, or not of sufficient interest, in comparison with others, to occupy a portion of the space to which the letters are limited.

light, oppression and force seemed to vanish like the phantoms of a feverish dream; mankind were disposed in the picturesque groups of universal brotherhood; and, in far distance, the ladder which Jacob saw in solemn vision connected earth with heaven, "and the angels of God were ascending and descending upon it." Lamb had no sympathy with these radiant hopes, except as they were part of his friend. He clung to the realities of life; to things nearest to him, which the force of habit had made dear; and caught tremblingly hold of the past. He delighted, indeed, to hear Coleridge talk of the distant and future; to see the palm-trees wave and the pyramids tower in the long perspective of his style; and to catch the prophetic notes of a universal harmony trembling in his voice but the pleasure was only that of admiration unalloyed by envy, and of the generous pride of friendship. The tendency of his mind to detect the beautiful and good in surrounding things, to nestle rather than to roam, was cherished by all the circumstances of his boyish days. He had become familiar with the vestiges of antiquity, both in his school and in his home of the Temple; and these became dear to him in his serious and affectionate childhood. But, perhaps, more even than those external associations, the situation of his parents, as it was elevated and graced by their character, moulded his young thoughts to the holy habit of a liberal obedience and unaspiring self-respect, which led rather to the embellishment of what was near than to the creation of visionary forms. He saw at home the daily beauty of a cheerful submission to a state bordering on the servile; he looked upward to his father's master, and the old benchers who walked with him on the stately terrace, with a modest erectness of mind; and he saw in his own humble home how well the decencies of life could be maintained on slender means by the exercise of generous principle. Another circumstance, akin to these, tended also to impart a tinge of venerableness to his early musings. His maternal grandmother was for many years housekeeper in the old and wealthy family of the Plumers of Hertfordshire, by whom she was held in true esteem; and his visits to their ancient mansion, where he had the free range of every apartment, gallery, and terraced walk, gave him "a peep at the contrasting accidents of a great fortune," and an alliance with that gentility of soul which to appreciate is to share. He has beautifully recorded his own recollections of this place in the essay entitled, "Blakesmoor in H——shire," in which he modestly vindicates his claim to partake in the associations of ancestry not his own, and shows the true value of high lineage by detecting the spirit of nobleness which breathes around it.

for the enkindling of generous affections, not only in those who may boast of its possession, but in all who can feel its influences.

While the bias of the minds of Coleridge and Lamb thus essentially differed, it is singular that their opinions on religion, and on those philosophical questions which border on religious belief, and receive their colour from it, agreed, although probably derived from various sources. Both were Unitarians, ardent admirers of the writings and character of Dr. Priestley, and both believers in necessity, according to Priestley's exposition, and in the inference which he drew from that doctrine respecting moral responsibility and the ultimate destiny of the human race. The adoption of this creed arose in Lamb from the accident of education; he was brought up to receive and love it; and attended, when circumstances permitted, at the chapel at Hackney, of which Mr. Belsham, afterward of Essex-street, was then the minister. It is remarkable that another of Lamb's most intimate friends, in whose conversation, next to that of Coleridge, he most delighted, Mr. Hazlitt, with whom he became acquainted at a subsequent time, and who came from a distant part of the country, was educated in the same faith. With Coleridge, whose early impressions were derived from the rites and services of the Church of England, Unitarianism was the result of a strong conviction; so strong that, with all the ardour of a convert, he sought to win proselytes to his chosen creed, and purposed to spend his days in preaching it. Neither of these young men, however, long continued to profess it. Lamb, in his mature life, rarely alluded to matters of religious doctrine; and, when he did so, evinced no sympathy with the professors of his once-loved creed. Hazlitt wrote of his father, who was a Unitarian minister at Wem, with honouring affection; and of his dissenting associates with respect, but he had obviously ceased to think or feel with them; and Coleridge's Remains indicate, what was well known to all who enjoyed the privilege of his conversation, that he not only reverted to a belief in the Trinitarian mysteries, but that he was accustomed to express as much distaste for Unitarianism, and for the spirit of its more active advocates, as the benignity of his nature would allow him to feel for any human opinion honestly cherished. Perhaps this solitary approach to intolerance in the universality of Coleridge's mind arose from the disapproval with which he might justly regard his own pride of understanding, as excited in defence of the doctrines he had adopted. To him there was much of devotional thought to be violated, many reverential associations, intertwined with the moral being,

to be rent away in the struggle of the intellect to grasp the doctrines which were alien to its nurture. But to Lamb these formed the simple creed of his childhood; and slender and barren as they seem to those who are united in religious sympathy with the great body of their fellow-countrymen, they sufficed for affections which had so strong a tendency to find out resting-places for themselves as his. Those who only knew him in his latter days, and who feel that if ever the spirit of Christianity breathed through a human life it breathed in his, will nevertheless trace with surprise the extraordinary vividness of impressions directly religious, and the self-jealousy with which he watched the cares and distractions of the world, which might efface them in his first letters. If in a life of ungenial toil, diversified with frequent sorrow, the train of these solemn meditations was broken; if he was led, in the distractions and labours of his course, to cleave more closely to surrounding objects than those early aspirations promised; if, in his cravings after immediate sympathy, he rather sought to perpetuate the social circle which he charmed, than to expatiate in scenes of untried being; his pious feelings were only diverted, not destroyed. The stream glided still, the under current of thought, sometimes breaking out in sallies which strangers did not understand, but always feeding and nourishing the most exquisite sweetness of disposition, and the most unobtrusive proofs of self-denying love.

While Lamb was enjoying habits of the closest intimacy with Coleridge in London, he was introduced by him to a young poet whose name has often been associated with his—Charles Lloyd—the son of a wealthy banker at Birmingham, who had recently cast off the trammels of the Society of Friends, and, smitten with the love of poetry, had become a student at the University of Cambridge. There he had been attached to Coleridge by the fascination of his discourse; and, having been admitted to his regard, was introduced by him to Lamb. Lloyd was endeared both to Lamb and Coleridge by a very amiable disposition and a pensive cast of thought; but his intellect bore little resemblance to that of either. He wrote, indeed, pleasing verses and with great facility—a facility fatal to excellence; but his mind was chiefly remarkable for the fine power of analysis which distinguishes his "London," and other of his later compositions. In this power of discriminating and distinguishing, carried to a pitch almost of painfulness, Lloyd has scarcely been equalled; and his poems, though rugged in point of versification, will be found by those who will read them with the calm attention they require, replete with critical and moral suggestions of the high-

est value. He and Coleridge were devoted wholly to literary pursuits; while Lamb's days were given to accounts, and only at snatches of time was he able to cultivate the faculty of which the society of Coleridge had made him imperfectly conscious.

Lamb's first compositions were in verse, produced slowly, at long intervals, and with self-distrust which the encouragements of Coleridge could not subdue. With the exception of a sonnet to Mrs. Siddons, whose acting, especially in the character of Lady Randolph, had made a deep impression upon him, they were exclusively personal. The longest and most elaborate is that beautiful piece of blank verse entitled "The Grandame," in which he so affectionately celebrates the virtues of the "antique world" of the aged housekeeper of Mr. Plumer. A youthful passion, which lasted only a few months, and which he afterward attempted to regard lightly as a folly past, inspired a few sonnets of very delicate feeling and exquisite music. On the death of his parents he felt himself called upon by duty to repay to his sister the solicitude with which she had watched over his infancy; and well indeed he performed it! To her, from the age of twenty-one, he devoted his existence; seeking thenceforth no connexion which could interfere with her supremacy in his affections, or impair his ability to sustain and to comfort her.

CHAPTER II.

[1796.]

Letters to Coleridge.

In the year 1796, Coleridge, having married and relinquished his splendid dream of emigration, was resident at Bristol; and Lamb, who had left the Temple, and lived with his father, then sinking into dotage, felt his absence from London bitterly, and sought a correspondence with him as, almost, his only comfort. "In your absence," he writes, in one of the earliest of his letters,* "I feel a stupor which makes me indifferent to the hopes and fears of this life. I sometimes wish to induce a religious turn of mind; but habits

* These and other passages are extracted from letters which are either too personal or not sufficiently interesting for entire publication.

are stubborn things, and my religious fervours are confined to some fleeting moments of occasional solitary devotion. A correspondence opening with you has roused me a little from my lethargy, and made me conscious of existence. Indulge me in it! I will not be very troublesome." And again a few days after: "You are the only correspondent, and, I might add, the only friend I have in the world. I go nowhere, and have no acquaintance. Slow of speech and reserved of manners, no one seeks or cares for my society, and I am left alone. Coleridge, I devoutly wish that fortune, which has made sport with you so long, may play one prank more, throw you into London, or some spot near it, and there snugify you for life. 'Tis a selfish but natural wish for me, cast on life's plain friendless." These appeals, it may well be believed, were not made in vain to one who delighted in the lavish communication of the riches of his own mind even to strangers; but none of the letters of Coleridge to Lamb have been preserved. He had just published his "Religious Musings," and the glittering enthusiasm of its language excited Lamb's pious feelings, almost to a degree of pain. "I dare not," says he of this poem, "criticise it. I like not to select any part where all is excellent. I can only admire and thank you for it, in the name of a lover of true poetry—

> 'Believe thou, oh my soul,
> Life is a vision shadowy of truth;
> And pain, and anguish, and the wormy grave,
> Shapes of a dream.'

I thank you for these lines, in the name of a necessitarian." To Priestley Lamb repeatedly alludes as to the object of their common admiration. "In reading your Religious Musings," says he, "I have felt a transient superiority over you. I *have* seen Priestley. I love to see his name repeated in your writings; I love and honour him almost profanely."* The same ferver glows in the sectarian piety of the following letter addressed to Coleridge, when fascinated with the idea of a cottage life.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Coleridge, I feel myself much your debtor for that spirit of confidence and friendship which dictated your last letter. May your soul find peace at last in your cottage life! I only wish

* He probably refers to the following lines in the Religious Musings:—

> "So Priestley, their patriot, and saint, and sage,
> Him, full of years, from his loved native land,
> Statesmen bloodstain'd, and priests idolatrous,
> Drove with vain hate. Calm, pitying, he return'd,
> And mused expectant on those promised years!"

you were *but* settled. Do continue to write to me. I read your letters with my sister, and they gave us both abundance of delight. Especially they please us too, when you talk in a religious strain; not but we are offended occasionally with a certain freedom of expression, a certain air of mysticism, more consonant to the conceits of pagan philosophy than consistent with humility of genuine piety. To instance now in your last letter, you say, 'it is by the press that God hath given finite spirits, both evil and good (I suppose you mean *simply* bad men and good men), a portion as it were of his Omnipresence!' Now, high as the human intellect comparatively will soar, and wide as its influence, malign or salutary, can extend, is there not, Coleridge, a distance between the Divine mind and it which makes such language blasphemy? Again, in your first fine consolatory epistle you say, 'you are a temporary sharer in human misery, that you may be an eternal partaker of the Divine Nature.' What more than this do those men say who are for exalting the man Christ Jesus into the second person of an unknown Trinity, men, whom you or I scruple not to call idolators? Man, full of imperfections, at best, and subject to wants which momentarily remind him of dependance; man, a weak and ignorant being, 'servile' from his birth 'to all the skiey influences,' with eyes sometimes open to discern the right path, but a head generally too dizzy to pursue it; man, in the pride of speculation, forgetting his nature, and hailing in himself the future God, must make the angels laugh. Be not angry with me, Coleridge; I wish not to cavil; I know I cannot *instruct* you; I only wish to *remind* you of that humility which best becometh the Christian character. God in the New Testament (*our best guide*) is represented to us in the kind, condescending, amiable, familiar light of a *parent:* and in my poor mind 'tis best for us so to consider of him, as our *heavenly* father, and our *best friend*, without indulging too bold conceptions of his nature. Let us learn to think humbly of ourselves, and rejoice in the appellation of 'dear children,' 'brethren,' and 'coheirs with Christ of the promises,' seeking to know no further.

"I am not insensible, indeed I am not, of the value of that first letter of yours, and I shall find reason to thank you for it again and again long after that blemish in it is forgotten. It will be a fine lesson of comfort to us whenever we read it; and read it we often shall, Mary and I.

"Accept our loves and best kind wishes for the welfare of yourself, and wife, and little one. Nor let me forget to wish you joy on your birthday so lately past; I thought you had been older. My kind thanks and remembrances to Lloyd.

"God love us all, and may he continue to be the father and the friend of the whole human race!

"C. LAMB.

"Sunday evening."

The next letter, commencing in a similar strain, diverges to literary topics, and especially alludes to "Walton's Angler," a book which Lamb always loved as it were a living friend.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"My dear friend, I am not ignorant that to be a partaker of the Divine Nature is a phrase to be met with in Scripture; I am only apprehensive lest we in these latter days, tinctured (some of us, perhaps, pretty deeply) with mystical notions and the pride of metaphysics, might be apt to affix to such phrases a meaning which the primitive users of them, the simple fisher of Galilee for instance, never intended to convey. With that other part of your apology I am not quite so well satisfied. You seem to me to have been straining your comparing faculties to bring together things infinitely distant and unlike; the feeble, narrow-sphered operations of the human intellect; and the everywhere diffused mind of the Deity, the peerless wisdom of Jehovah. Even the expression appears to me inaccurate—portion of omnipresence—omnipresence is an attribute whose very essence is entireness. How can omnipresence be affirmed of anything in part? But enough of this spirit of disputaciousness. Let us attend to the proper business of human life, and talk a little together respecting our domestic concerns. Do you continue to make me acquainted with what you are doing, and how soon you are likely to be settled once for all?

"Have you seen Bowles's new poem on 'Hope?' What character does it bear? Has he exhausted his stores of tender plaintiveness? or is he the same in this last as in all his former pieces? The duties of the day call me off from this pleasant intercourse with my friend; so for the present adieu Now for the truant borrowing of a few minutes from business. Have you met with a new poem called the 'Pursuits of Literature?' From the extracts in the 'British Review' I judge it to be a very humorous thing; in particular I remember what I thought a very happy character of Dr. Darwin's poetry. Among all your quaint readings, did you ever light upon 'Walton's Complete Angler?' I asked you the question once before; it breathes the very spirit of innocence, purity, and simplicity of heart; there are many choice, old verses interspersed in it; it would sweeten a man's temper at any time

to read it; it would Christianize every discordant angry passion; pray make yourself acquainted with it.

"When will Southey be delivered of his new epic? Madoc, I think, is to be the name of it, though that is a name not familiar to my ears. What progress do you make in your hymns? What 'Review' are you connected with? if with any, why do you delay to notice White's book? You are justly offended at its profaneness, but surely you have undervalued its *wit*, or you would have been more loud in its praises. Do not you think that in Slender's death and madness there is most exquisite humour mingled with tenderness, that is irresistible, truly Shakspearian? Be more full in your mention of it. Poor fellow, he has (very undeservedly) lost by it; nor do I see that it is likely ever to reimburse him the charge of printing, &c. Give it a lift if you can. I am just now wondering whether you will ever come to town again, Coleridge; 'tis among the things I dare not hope, but can't help wishing. For myself, I can live in the midst of town luxury and superfluity and not long for them; and I can't see why your children might not hereafter do the same. Remember you are not in Arcadia when you are in the west of England, and they may catch infection from the world without visiting the metropolis. But you seem to have set your heart upon this same cottage plan, and God prosper you in the experiment! I am at a loss for more to write about, so 'tis as well that I am arrived at the bottom of my paper.

"God love you, Coleridge; our best loves and tenderest wishes await on you, your Sarah, and your little one.

"C. L."

Having been encouraged by Coleridge to entertain the thought of publishing his verses, he submitted the poem called "The Grandame" to his friend with the following letter:—

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Monday night.

"Unfurnished at present with any sheet-filling subject, I shall continue my letter gradually and journal-wise. My second thoughts entirely coincide with your thoughts on 'Joan of Arc,' and I can only wonder at my childish judgment which overlooked the first book and could prefer the ninth; not that I was insensible to the soberer beauties of the former, but the latter caught me with its glare of magic; the former, however, left a more pleasing general recollection in my mind. Let me add, the first book was the favourite of my sister; and *I* now, with Joan, often 'think on Domremi and the fields of

Arc.' I must not pass over without acknowledging my obligations to your full and satisfactory account of personifications. I have read it again and again, and it will be a guide to my future taste. Perhaps I had estimated Southey's merits too much by number, weight, and measure. I now agree completely and entirely in your opinion of the genius of Southey. Your own image of melancholy is illustrative of what you teach, and in itself masterly. I conjecture it is disbranched from one of your embryo 'hymns.' When they are mature for birth (were I you) I should print 'em in one separate volume, with 'Religious Musings,' and your part of the 'Joan of Arc.' Birds of the same soaring wing should hold on their flight in company. Once for all (and by renewing the subject you will only renew in me the condemnation of Tantalus), I hope to be able to pay you a visit (if you are then in Bristol) some time in the latter end of August or beginning of September, for a week or fortnight; before that time, office business puts an absolute veto on my coming. Of the blank verses I spoke of, the following lines are the only tolerable complete ones I have written out of not more than one hundred and fifty. That I get on so slowly you may fairly impute to want of practice in composition, when I declare to you that (the few verses which you have seen excepted) I have not written fifty lines since I left school. It may not be amiss to remark that my grandmother (on whom the verses are written) lived housekeeper in a family the fifty or sixty last years of her life; that she was a woman of exemplary piety and goodness; and for many years before her death was terribly afflicted with a cancer in her breast, which she bore with true Christian patience. You may think that I have not kept enough apart the ideas of her heavenly and her earthly master, but recollect I have designedly given in to her own way of feeling; and if she had a failing, 'twas that she respected her master's family too much, not reverenced her Maker too little. The lines begin imperfectly, as I may probably connect 'em if I finish at all; and if I do, Biggs shall print 'em in a more economical way than you yours, for (sonnets and all) they won't make a thousand lines as I propose completing 'em, and the substance must be wiredrawn.

The following letter, written at intervals, will give an insight into Lamb's spirit at this time, in its lighter and gayer moods. It would seem that his acquaintance with the old English dramatists had just commenced with Beaumont and Fletcher, and Massinger.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Tuesday evening.

"To your list of illustrative personifications, into which a fine imagination enters, I will take leave to add the following from Beaumont and Fletcher's 'Wife for a Month;' 'tis the conclusion of a description of a seafight:—'The game of *death* was never played so nobly; the meager thief grew wanton in his mischiefs, and his shrunk hollow eyes smiled on his ruins.' There is fancy in these of a lower order, from 'Bonduca:' 'Then did I see these valiant men of Britain, like boding owls, creep into todds of ivy, and hoot their fears to one another nightly.' Not that it is a personification; only it just caught my eye in a little extract-book I keep, which is full of quotations from B. and F. in particular, in which authors I can't help thinking there is a greater richness of poetical fancy than in any one, Shakspeare excepted. Are you acquainted with Massinger? At a hazard I will trouble you with a passage from a play of his called 'A Very Woman.' The lines are spoken by a lover (disguised) to his faithless mistress. You will remark the fine effect of the double endings. You will by your ear distinguish the lines, for I write 'em as prose. 'Not far from where my father lives, *a lady*, a neighbour by, blessed with as great a *beauty* as nature durst bestow without *undoing*, dwelt, and most happily, as I thought then, and blessed the house a thousand times she *dwelt* in. This beauty, in the blossom of my youth, when my first fire knew no adulterate *incense*, nor I no way to flatter but my *fondness;* in all the bravery my friends could *show me*, in all the faith my innocence could *give me*, in the best language my true tongue could *tell me*, and all the broken sighs my sick heart *lend me*, I sued and served; long did I serve this *lady*, long was my travail, long my trade to *win her;* with all the duty of my soul I SERVED HER.' 'Then she must love.' 'She did, but never me: she could not *love me;* she would not love, she hated—more, she *scorned me;* and in so poor and base a way *abused me* for all my services, for all my *bounties*, so bold neglects flung on me.' 'What out of love, and worthy love, I *gave her* (shame to her most unworthy mind), to fools, to girls, to fiddlers and her boys she flung, all in disdain of me.' One more passage strikes my eye from B. and F.'s 'Palamon and Arcite.' One of 'em complains in prison: 'This is all our world; we shall know nothing here but one another; hear nothing but the clock that tells us our woes; the vine shall grow, but we shall never see it,' &c. Is not the last circumstance exquisite? I mean not to lay myself open by saying they exceed Milton, and perhaps Col-

lins, in sublimity. But don't you conceive all poet's, after Shakspeare, yield to 'em in variety of genius? Massinger treads close on their heels; but you are most probably as well acquainted with his writings as your humble servant. My quotations, in that case, will only serve to expose my barrenness of matter. Southey, in simplicity and tenderness, is excelled decidedly only, I think, by Beaumont and F. in his 'Maid's Tragedy,' and some parts of 'Philaster' in particular, and elsewhere, occasionally; and perhaps by Cowper, in his 'Crazy Kate,' and in parts of his translation; such as the speeches of Hecuba and Andromache. I long to know your opinion of that translation. The Odyssey especially is surely very Homeric. What nobler than the appearance of Phœbus at the beginning of the Iliad, the lines ending with 'Dread sounding, bounding on the silver bow!'

"I beg you will give me your opinion of the translation; it afforded me high pleasure. As curious a specimen of translation as ever fell into my hands, is a young man's in our office, of a French novel. What in the original was literally 'amiable delusions of the fancy,' he proposed to render 'the fair frauds of the imagination.' I had much trouble in licking the book into any meaning at all. Yet did the knave clear fifty or sixty pounds by subscription and selling the copyright. The book itself not a week's work! To-day's portion of my journalizing epistle has been very dull and poverty-stricken. I will here end."

"Tuesday night.

"I have been drinking egg hot and smoking Oronooko, (associating circumstances, which ever forcibly recall to my mind our evenings and nights at the Salutation), my eyes and brain are heavy and asleep, but my heart is awake; and if words came as ready as ideas, and ideas as feelings, I could say ten hundred kind things. Coleridge, you know not my supreme happiness at having one on earth (though counties separate us) whom I can call a friend. Remember you those tender lines of Logan?—

> 'Our broken friendships we deplore,
> And loves of youth that are no more;
> No after friendships e'er can raise
> Th' endearments of our early days,
> And ne'er the heart such fondness prove,
> As when we first began to love.'

"I am writing at random, and half-tipsy, what you may not *equally* understand, as you will be sober when you read it, but *my* sober and *my* half-tipsy hours you are alike a sharer in. Good-night.

'Then up rose our bard like a prophet in drink,
Craigdoroch, thou'lt soar when creation shall sink.'—BURNS."

"Thursday.

"I am now in high hopes to be able to visit you, if perfectly convenient on your part, by the end of next month—perhaps the last week or fortnight in July. A change of scene and a change of faces would do me good, even if that scene were not to be Bristol, and those faces Coleridge's and his friends'! In the words of Terence, a little altered, 'Tædet me hujus quotidiani *mundi*.' I am heartily sick of the everyday scenes of life. I shall half wish you unmarried (don't show this to Mrs. C.) for one evening only, to have the pleasure of smoking with you, and drinking egg hot in some little smoky room in a pothouse, for I know not yet how I shall like you in a decent room, and looking quite happy. My best love and respects to Sara notwithstanding.

"Yours sincerely,

"CHARLES LAMB."

A proposal by Coleridge to print Lamb's poems with a new edition of his own (an association in which Lloyd was ultimately included) occasioned reciprocal communications of each other's verses, and many questions of small alterations suggested and argued on both sides. I have thought it better to omit much of this verbal criticism, which, not very interesting in itself, is unintelligible without a contemporary reference to the poems which are its subject. The next letter was written on hearing of Coleridge being afflicted with a painful disease.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"My brother, my friend—I am distressed for you, believe me I am; not so much for your painful, troublesome complaint, which, I trust, is only for a time, as for those anxieties which brought it on, and perhaps even now may be nursing its malignity. Tell me, dearest of my friends, is your mind at peace, or has anything, yet unknown to me, happened to give you fresh disquiet, and steal from you all the pleasant dreams of future rest? Are you still (I fear you are) far from being comfortably settled? Would to God it were in my power to contribute towards the bringing of you into the haven where you would be. But you are too well skilled in the philosophy of consolation to need my humble tribute of advice; in pain, and in sickness, and in all manner of disappointments, I trust you have that within you which shall speak peace to your mind. Make it, I entreat you, one of your puny comforts that

I feel for you, and share all your griefs with you. I feel as if I were troubling you about *little* things; now I am going to resume the subject of our last two letters, but it may divert us both from unpleasanter feelings to make such matters, in a manner, of importance. Without further apology, then, it was not that I did not relish, that I did not in my heart thank you for those little pictures of your feelings which you lately sent me, if I neglected to mention them. You may remember you had said much the same things before to me on the same subject in a former letter, and I considered those last verses as only the identical thoughts better clothed; either way (in prose or verse), such poetry must be welcome to me. I love them as I love the Confessions of Rousseau, and for the same reason; the same frankness, the same openness of heart, the same disclosure of all the most hidden and delicate affections of the mind: they make me proud to be thus esteemed worthy of the place of friend-confessor, brother-confessor, to a man like Coleridge. This last is, I acknowledge, language too high for friendship; but it is also, I declare, too sincere for flattery. Now, to put on stilts, and talk magnificently about trifles. I condescend, then, to your counsel, Coleridge, and allow my first sonnet (sick to death am I to make mention of my sonnets, and I blush to be so taken up with them, indeed I do), I allow it to run thus, '*Fairy Land*,' &c., &c., as I last wrote it.

* * * * * *

"The fragments I now send you I want printed to get rid of 'em; for, while they stick burlike to my memory, they tempt me to go on with the idle trade of versifying, which I long, most sincerely I speak it, I long to leave off, for it is unprofitable to my soul; I feel it is; and these questions about words and debates about alterations take me off, I am conscious, from the proper business of *my* life. Take my sonnets, once for all, and do not propose any reamendments, or mention them again in any shape to me, I charge you. I blush that my mind can consider them as things of any worth. And, pray, admit or reject these fragments as you like or dislike them, without ceremony. Call 'em sketches, fragments, or what you will, and do not entitle any of my *things* love sonnets, as I told you to call 'em; 'twill only make me look little in my own eyes; for it is a passion of which I retain *nothing*: 'twas a weakness, concerning which I may say, in the words of Petrarch (whose life is now open before me), 'if it drew me out of some vices, it also prevented the growth of many virtues, filling me with the love of the creature rather than the Creator, which is the death of the soul.' Thank God, the folly has left me for ever; not even a review of my

love verses renews one wayward wish in me; and if I am at all solicitous to trim 'em out in their best apparel, it is because they are to make their appearance in good company. Now to my fragments. Lest you have lost my Grandame, she shall be one. 'Tis among the few verses I ever wrote, that to Mary is another, which profit me in the recollection. God love her; may we two never love each other less!

"These, Coleridge, are the few sketches I have thought worth preserving; how will they relish thus detached? Will you reject all or any of them? They are thine, do whatsoever thou listeth with them. My eyes ache with writing long and late, and I wax wondrous sleepy. God bless you and yours, me and mine. Good-night.

"C. LAMB.

"I will keep my eyes open reluctantly a minute longer to tell you that I love you for those simple, tender, heart-flowing lines with which you conclude your last, and, in my eye, best sonnet (so you call 'em), 'So, for the mother's sake, the child was dear, and dearer was the mother for the child.' Cultivate simplicity, Coleridge, or rather, I should say, banish elaborateness; for simplicity springs spontaneous from the heart and carries into daylight with its own modest buds, and genuine, sweet, and clear flowers of expression. I allow no hotbeds in the garden of Parnassus. I am unwilling to go to bed and leave my sheet unfilled (a good piece of night work for an idle body like me), so will finish by begging you to send me the earliest account of your complaint, its progress, or (as I hope to God you will be able to send me) the tale of your recovery, or at least amendment. My tenderest remembrances to your Sara.

"Once more good-night."

A wish to dedicate his portion of the volume to his sister gave occasion to the following touching letter:—

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Coleridge, I love you for dedicating your poetry to Bowles: Genius of the sacred fountain of tears, it was he who led you gently by the hand through all this valley of weeping, showed you the dark green yew-trees and the willow shades where, by the fall of waters, you might indulge an uncomplaining melancholy, a delicious regret for the past, or weave fine visions of that awful future, 'when all the vanities of life's brief day oblivion's hurrying hand hath swept away, and all its sorrows at the awful blast of the archangel's trump are but as shadows past.' I have another sort of dedication in my head

for my few things, which I want to know if you approve of, and can insert. I mean to inscribe them to my sister. It will be unexpected, and it will give her pleasure; or do you think it will look whimsical at all? As I have not spoken to her about it, I can easily reject the idea. But there is a monotony in the affections, which people living together, or, as we do now, very frequently seeing each other, are apt to give into; a sort of indifference in the expression of kindness for each other, which demands that we should sometimes call to our aid the trickery of surprise. Do you publish with Lloyd, or without him? in either case my little portion may come last, and, after the fashion of orders to a country correspondent, I will give directions how I should like to have 'em done. The title-page to stand thus:—

POEMS,

BY

CHARLES LAMB, OF THE INDIA-HOUSE.

"Under this title the following motto, which, for want of room, I put over leaf, and desire you to insert whether you like it or no. May not a gentleman choose what arms, mottoes, or armorial bearings the herald will give him leave, without consulting his republican friend, who might advise none? May not a publican put up the sign of the Saracen's Head, even though his undiscerning neighbour should prefer, as more genteel, the Cat and Gridiron?

"'This beauty, in the blossom of my youth,
When my first fire knew no adult'rate incense,
Nor I no way to flatter but my fondness,
In the best language my true tongue could tell me,
And all the broken sighs my sick heart lend me,
I sued and served. Long did I love this lady.'"—*Massinger.*

THE DEDICATION.

THE FEW FOLLOWING POEMS,
CREATURES OF THE FANCY AND THE FEELING
IN LIFE'S MORE VACANT HOURS,
PRODUCED, FOR THE MOST PART, BY
LOVE IN IDLENESS,
ARE,
WITH ALL A BROTHER'S FONDNESS,
INSCRIBED TO
MARY ANN LAMB,
THE AUTHOR'S BEST FRIEND AND SISTER.

"This is the pomp and paraphernalia of parting, with which I take my leave of a passion which has reigned so royally (so long) within me; thus, with its trappings of leaureateship, I fling it off, pleased and satisfied with myself that the weakness troubles me no longer. I am wedded, Coleridge, to the fortunes of my sister and my poor old father. Oh! my friend, I think sometimes could I recall the days that are past, which among them should I choose? not those 'merrier days,' not the 'pleasant days of hope,' not 'those wanderings with a fair-hair'd maid,' which I have so often and so feelingly regretted, but the days, Coleridge, of a *mother's* fondness for her *schoolboy*. What would I give to call her back to earth for *one* day, on my knees to ask her pardon for all those little asperities of temper which, from time to time, have given her gentle spirit pain? and the day, my friend, I trust, will come, there will be 'time enough' for kind offices of love, if 'Heaven's eternal year' be ours. Hereafter her meek spirit shall not reproach me. Oh, my friend, cultivate the filial feelings! and let no man think himself released from the kind 'charities' of relationship; these shall give him peace at the last; these are the best foundation for every species of benevolence. I rejoice to hear, by certain channels, that you, my friend, are reconciled with all your relations. 'Tis the most kindly and natural species of love, and we have all the associated train of early feelings to secure its strength and perpetuity. Send me an account of your health; *indeed* I am solicitous about you. God love you and yours.

"C. LAMB."

The following, written about this time, alludes to some desponding expression in a letter which is lost, and which Coleridge had combated.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"I had put my letter into the post rather hastily, not expecting to have to acknowledge another from you so soon. This morning's present has made me alive again: my last night's epistle was childishly querulous; but you have put a little life into me, and I will thank you for your remembrance of me while my sense of it is yet warm; for if I linger a day or two I may use the same phrase of acknowledgment, or similar, but the feeling that dictates it now will be gone. I shall send you a *caput mortuum*, not a *cor vivens*. Thy Watchman's, thy bellman's verses I do retort upon thee, thou libellous varlet; why you cried the hours yourself, and who made you so proud? But I submit, to show my humility,

most implicitly to your dogmas. I reject entirely the copy of verses you reject. With regard to my leaving off versifying you have said so many pretty things, so many fine compliments, ingeniously decked out in the garb of sincerity, and undoubtedly springing from a present feeling somewhat like sincerity, that you might melt the most un-muse-ical soul—did you not (now for a Rowland compliment for your profusion of Olivers), did you not, in your very epistle, by the many pretty fancies and profusion of heart displayed in it, dissuade and discourage me from attempting anything after you? At present I have not leisure to make verses, nor anything approaching to a fondness for the exercise. In the ignorant present time, who can answer for the future man? 'At lovers' perjuries Jove laughes'—and poets have sometimes a disingenuous way of forswearing their occupation. This, though, is not my case. Publish your Burns when and how you like, it will be new to me; my memory of it is very confused, and tainted with unpleasant associations. Burns was the god of my idolatry, as Bowles of yours. I am jealous of your fraternizing with Bowles, when I think you relish him more than Burns, or my old favourite, Cowper. But you conciliate matters when you talk of the 'divine chitchat' of the latter: by the expression, I see you thoroughly relish him. I love Mrs. Coleridge for her excuses a hundred fold more dearly than if she heaped 'line upon line,' out Hannah-ing Hannah More; and had rather hear you sing 'Did a very little baby' by your family fireside, than listen to you, when you were repeating one of Bowles's sweetest sonnets, in your sweet manner, while we two were indulging sympathy, a solitary luxury, by the fireside at the Salutation. Yet have I no higher ideas of heaven. Your company was one 'cordial in this melancholy vale;' the remembrance of it is a blessing partly, and partly a curse. When I can abstract myself from things present, I can enjoy it with a freshness of relish; but it more constantly operates to an unfavourable comparison with the uninteresting converse I always and *only* can partake in. Not a soul loves Bowles here: scarce one has heard of Burns; few but laugh at me for reading my Testament; they talk a language I understand not; I conceal sentiments that would be a puzzle to them. I can only converse with you by letter, and with the dead in their books. My sister, indeed, is all I can wish in a companion; but our spirits are alike poorly; our reading and knowledge from the selfsame sources; our communication with the scenes of the world alike narrow; never having kept separate company, or any 'company' *together*; never having read separate books, and few books *together*, what knowledge

have we to convey to each other? In our little range of duties and connexions, how few sentiments can take place, without friends, with few books, with a taste for religion rather than a strong religious habit! We need some support, some leading-strings to cheer and direct us; you talk very wisely, and be not sparing of *your advice*. Continue to remember us, and to show us you do remember us: we will take as lively an interest in what concerns you and yours. All I can add to your happiness will be sympathy: you can add to mine *more*; you can teach me wisdom. I am indeed an unreasonable correspondent; but I was unwilling to let my last night's letter go off without this qualifier: you will perceive by this my mind is easier, and you will rejoice. I do not expect or wish you to write till you are moved; and, of course, shall not, till you announce to me that event, think of writing myself. Love to Mrs. Coleridge and David Hartley, and my kind remembrance to Lloyd if he is with you. "C. LAMB.

"I will get 'Nature and Art;' have not seen it yet, nor any of Jeremy Taylor's works."

CHAPTER III.

[1797.]

Letters to Coleridge.

THE volume which was to combine the early poetry of the three friends was not completed in the year 1796, and proceeded slowly through the press in the following year; Lamb occasionally submitting an additional sonnet or correction of one already sent to the judgment of Coleridge, and filling long letters with minute suggestions on Coleridge's share of the work, and high but honest expressions of praise of particular images and thoughts. The eulogy is only interesting as indicative of the reverential feeling with which Lamb regarded the genius of Coleridge; but one or two specimens of the gentle rebuke which he ventured on, when the gorgeousness of Coleridge's language seemed to oppress his sense, are worthy of preservation. The following relates to a line in the noble Ode on the Departing Year, in which Coleridge had written of

"Th' ethereal multitude,
Whose purple locks with snow-white glories shone."

"'Purple locks and snow-white glories!' these are things the muse talks about when, to borrow H. Walpole's witty phrase, she is not finely phrensied, or a little lightheaded, that's all—'Purple locks!' They may manage those things differently in fairy land; but your 'golden tresses' are to my fancy."

On this remonstrance Coleridge changed the "purple" into "golden," defending his original epithet; and Lamb thus gave up the point:—

"'Golden locks and snow-white glories' are as incongruous as your former; and if the great Italian painters, of whom my friend knows about as much as the man in the moon, if these great gentleman be on your side, I see no harm in your retaining the purple. The glories that *I* have observed to encircle the heads of saints and madonas in those old paintings have been mostly of a dirty drab-coloured yellow—a dull gambogian. Keep your old line; it will excite a confused kind of pleasurable idea in the reader's mind, not clear enough to be called a conception, nor just enough, I think, to reduce to painting. It is a rich line, you say; and riches hide many faults." And the word "wreathed" was ultimately adopted instead of purple or golden: but the snow-white glories remain.

Not satisfied with the dedication of his portion of the volume to his sister, and the sonnet which had been sent to the press, Lamb urged on Coleridge the insertion of another, which seems to have been ultimately withheld as too poor in poetical merit for publication. The rejected sonnet, and the references made to it by the writer, have an interest now beyond what mere fancy can give. After various critical remarks on an ode of Coleridge, he thus introduced the subject:—

"If the fraternal sentiment conveyed in the following lines will atone for the total want of anything like merit or genius in it, I desire you will print it next after my sonnet to my sister.

Friend of my earliest years and childish days,
My joys, my sorrows, thou with me hast shared,
Companion dear; and we alike have fared,
Poor pilgrims we, through life's unequal ways.
It were unwisely done, should we refuse
To cheer our path, as featly as we may,
Our lonely path to cheer, as travellers use
With merry song, quaint tale, or roundelay.
And we will sometimes talk past troubles o'er,
Of mercies shown, and all our sickness heal'd,
And in his judgments God rememb'ring love:
And we will learn to praise God evermore,
For those 'glad tidings of great joy,' revealed
By that sooth messenger sent from above.

1797.

"This has been a sad long letter of business, with no room in it for what honest Bunyan terms heart-work. I have just room left to congratulate you on your removal to Stowey; to wish success to all your projects; to 'bid fair peace' be to that house; to send my love and best wishes, breathed warmly, after your dear Sara and her little David Hartley. If Lloyd be with you, bid him write to me; I feel to whom I am obliged primarily for two very friendly letters I have received already from him. A dainty sweet book that 'Nature and Art' is. I am at present re-rereading Priestley's Examination of the Scotch Doctors; how the rogue strings 'em up! three together. You have no doubt read that clear, strong, humorous, most entertaining peace of reasoning? If not, procure it, and be exquisitely amused. I wish I could get more of Priestley's works. Can you recommend me to any more books, easy of access, such as circulating shops afford? God bless you and yours.

"Monday morning, at office.

"Poor Mary is very unwell with a sore throat and a slight species of scarlet fever. God bless her too."

He recurs to the subject in his next letter, which is also interesting as urging Coleridge to attempt some great poem worthy of his genius.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"I need not repeat my wishes to have my little sonnets printed *verbatim* my last way. In particular, I fear lest you should prefer printing my first sonnet, as you have done more than once, 'did the wand of Merlin wave,' it looks so like Mr. Merlin, the ingenious successor of the immortal Merlin, now living in good health and spirits, and flourishing in magical reputation, in Oxford-street; and, on my life, one half who read it would understand it so. Do put 'em forth finally, as I have, in various letters, settled it; for first a man's self is to be pleased, and then his friends, and, of course, the greater number of his friends, if they differ *inter se*. Thus taste may safely be put to the vote. I do long to see our names together; not for vanity's sake, and naughty pride of heart altogether, for not a living soul I know, or am intimate with, will scarce read the book; so I shall gain nothing, *quoad famam;* and yet there is a little vanity mixes in it, I cannot help denying. I am aware of the unpoetical cast of the six last lines of my last sonnet, and think myself unwarranted in smuggling so tame a thing into the book; only the sentiments of those six

lines are thoroughly congenial to me in my state of mind, and I wish to accumulate perpetuating tokens of my affection to poor Mary; that it has no originality in its cast, nor anything in the feelings, but what is common and natural to thousands, nor ought properly to be called poetry, I see; still it will tend to keep present to my mind a view of things which I ought to indulge. These six lines, too, have not, to a reader, a connectedness with the foregoing. Omit it if you like. What a treasure it is to my poor, indolent, and unemployed mind thus to lay hold on a subject to talk about, though 'tis but a sonnet, and that of the lowest order! How mournfully inactive I am! 'Tis night; good-night.

"My sister, I thank God, is nigh recovered: she was seriously ill. Do, in your next letter, and that right soon, give me some satisfaction respecting your present situation at Stowey. Is it a farm you have got? and what does your worship know about farming?

"Coleridge, I want you to write an epic poem. Nothing short of it can satisfy the vast capacity of true poetic genius. Having one great end to direct all your poetical faculties to, and on which to lay out your hopes, your ambition will show you to what you are equal. By the sacred energies of Milton! by the dainty, sweet, and soothing phantasies of honey-tongued Spenser! I adjure you to attempt the epic. Or do something more ample than the writing an occasional brief ode or sonnet; something 'to make yourself for ever known—to make the age to come your own.' But I prate; doubtless you meditate something. When you are exalted among the lords of epic fame, I shall recall with pleasure, and exultingly, the days of your humility, when you disdained not to put forth, in the same volume with mine, your 'Religious Musings,' and that other poem from the 'Joan of Arc,' those promising first-fruits of high renown to come. You have learning, you have fancy, you have enthusiasm, you have strength, and amplitude of wing enow for flights like those I recommend. In the vast and unexplored regions of fairy-land there is ground enough unfound and uncultivated; search these, and realize your favourite Susquehannah scheme. In all our comparisons of taste, I do not know whether I have ever heard your opinion of a poet very dear to me—the now-out-of-fashion Cowley. Favour me with your judgment of him, and tell me if his prose essays, in particular, as well as no inconsiderable part of his verse, be not delicious. I prefer the graceful rambling of his essays even to the courtly elegance and ease of Addison; abstracting from this the latter's exquisite humour.

* * * * * *

"When the little volume is printed, send me three or four, at all events not more than six copies, and tell me if I put you to any additional expense by printing with you. I have no thought of the kind, and in that case must reimburse you."

In the commencement of this year Coleridge removed from Bristol to a cottage at Nether Stowey, to imbody his favourite dream of a cottage life. This change of place probably delayed the printing of the volume; and Coleridge, busy with a thousand speculations, became irregular in replying to the letters with writing which Lamb solaced his dreary hours. The following are the most interesting portions of the only letters which remain of this year.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Priestley, whom I sin in almost adoring, speaks of 'such a choice of company as tends to keep up that right bent and firmness of mind which a necessary intercourse with the world would otherwise warp and relax.' 'Such fellowship is the true balsam of life; its cement is infinitely more durable than that of the friendships of the world, and it looks for its proper fruit and complete gratification to the life beyond the grave.' Is there a possible chance for such a one as I to realize in this world such friendships! Where am I to look for 'em? What testimonials shall I bring of my being worthy of such friendship? Alas! the great and good go together in separate herds, and leave such as I to lag far, far behind in all intellectual, and, far more grievous to say, in all moral accomplishments. Coleridge, I have not one truly elevated character among my acquaintance; not one Christian; not one, but undervalues Christianity—singly what am I to do? Wesley (have you read his life?), was he not an elevated character? Wesley has said, 'Religion is not a solitary thing.' Alas! it necessarily is so with me, or next to solitary. 'Tis true you write to me. But correspondence by letter and personal intimacy are very widely different. Do, do write to me, and do some good to my mind, already how much 'warped and relaxed' by the world! 'Tis the conclusion of another evening. Good-night. God have us all in his keeping.

"If you are sufficiently at leisure, oblige me with an account of your plan of life at Stowey; your literary occupations and prospects; in short, make me acquainted with every circumstance which, as relating to you, can be interesting to me. Are you yet a Berkleyan? Make me one. I rejoice in being, speculatively, a necessitarian. Would to God I were habitually a practical one. Confirm me in the faith of that great

and glorious doctrine, and keep me steady in the contemplation of it. You some time since expressed an intention you had of finishing some extensive work on the Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion. Have you let that intention go! or are you doing anything towards it? Make to yourself other ten talents. My letter is full of nothingness. I talk of nothing. But I must talk. I love to write to you. I take pride in it. It makes me think less meanly of myself. It makes me think myself not totally disconnected from the better part of mankind. I know I am too dissatisfied with the beings around me; but I cannot help occasionally exclaiming, 'Wo is me, that I am constrained to dwell with Meshech, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar.' I know I am in noways better in practice than my neighbours, but I have a taste for religion, an occasional earnest aspiration after perfection, which they have not. I gain nothing by being with such as myself; we encourage one another in mediocrity. I am always longing to be with men more excellent than myself. All this must sound odd to you, but these are my predominant feelings when I sit down to write to you, and I should put force upon my mind were I to reject them. Yet I rejoice, and feel my privilege with gratitude, when I have been reading some wise book, such as I have just been reading, 'Priestley on Philosophical Necessity,' in the thought that I enjoy a kind of communion, a kind of friendship even with the great and good. Books are to me instead of friends. I wish they did not resemble the latter in their scarceness.

"And how does little David Hartley? '*Ecquid in antiquam virtutem?*' Does his mighty name work wonders yet upon his little frame and opening mind? I did not distinctly understand you; you don't mean to make an actual ploughman of him? Is Lloyd with you yet? Are you intimate with Southey? What poems is he about to publish? he hath a most prolific brain, and is indeed a most sweet poet. But how can you answer all the various mass of interrogation I have put to you in the course of the sheet? Write back just what you like, only write something, however brief. I have now nigh finished my page, and got to the end of another evening (Monday evening), and my eyes are heavy and sleepy, and my brain unsuggestive. I have just heart enough awake to say good-night once more, and God love you, my dear friend, God love us all. Mary bears an affectionate remembrance of you.

"CHARLES LAMB."

A poem of Coleridge, emulous of Southey's "Joan of Arc," which he proposed to call the "Maid of Orleans," on which

Lamb had made some critical remarks, produced the humorous recantation with which the following letter opens.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Your poem is altogether admirable; parts of it are even exquisite. I perceived all its excellences, on a first reading, as readily as now you have been removing a supposed film from my eyes. I was only struck with a certain faulty disproportion, in the matter and the *style*, which I still think I perceive, between these lines and the former ones. I had an end in view; I wished to make you reject the poem, only as being discordant with the other, and, in subservience to that end, it was politically done in me to overpass and make no mention of merit, which, could you think me capable of *overlooking*, might reasonably damn for ever in your judgment all pretensions in me to be critical. There, I will be judged by Lloyd whether I have not made a very handsome recantation. I was in the case of a man whose friend has asked him his opinion of a certain young lady; the deluded wight gives judgment against her in *toto;* don't like her face, her walk, her manners; finds fault with her eyebrows; can't see no wit in her; his friend looks blank, he begins to smell a rat; wind veers about; he acknowledges her good sense, her judgment in dress, a certain simplicity in manners and honesty of heart; something, too, in her manners which gains upon you after a short acquaintance; and then her accurate pronunciation of the French language, and a pretty uncultivated taste in drawing. The reconciled gentleman smiles applause, squeezes him by the hand, and hopes he will do him the honour of taking a bit of dinner with Mrs. —— and him—a plain family dinner—some day next week; 'for, I suppose, you never heard we were married. I'm glad to see you like my wife, however; you'll come and see her, ha?' Now, am I too proud to retract entirely? Yet I do perceive I am in some sort straitened; you are manifestly wedded to this poem, and what fancy has joined let no man separate. I turn me to the Joan of Arc, second book.

"The solemn openings of it are with sounds, which Ll. would say 'are silence to the mind.' The deep preluding strains are fitted to initiate the mind, with a pleasing awe, into the sublimest mysteries of theory concerning man's nature, and his noblest destination; the philosophy of a first cause; of subordinate agents in creation, superior to man; the subserviency of pagan worship and pagan faith to the introduction of a purer and more perfect religion, which you so elegantly describe as winning, with gradual steps, her difficult

way northward from Bethabra. After all this cometh Joan, a *publican's* daughter, sitting on an alehouse *bench* and marking the *swingings* of the *signboard*, finding a poor man, his wife, and six children starved to death with cold, and thence roused into a state of mind proper to receive visions, emblematical of equality; which, what the devil Joan had to do with, I don't know, or, indeed, with the French and American revolutions, though that needs no pardon, it is executed so nobly. After all, if you perceive no disproportion, all argument is vain: I do not so much object to parts. Again, when you talk of building your fame on these lines in preference to the 'Religious Musings,' I cannot help conceiving of you and of the author of that as two different persons, and I think you a very vain man.

"I have been rereading your letter; much of it I *could* dispute, but with the latter part of it, in which you compare the two Joans, with respect to their predispositions for fanaticism, I, *toto corde*, coincide with, only I think that Southey's strength rather lies in the description of the emotions of the Maid under the weight of inspiration; these (I see no mighty difference between *her* describing them or *you* describing them), these if you only equal, the previous admirers of his poems, as is natural, will prefer his; if you surpass, prejudice will scarcely allow it, and I scarce think you will surpass, though your specimen at the conclusion, I am in earnest, I think very nigh equals them; and in an account of a fanatic or of a prophet, the description of her *emotions* is expected to be most highly finished. By-the-way, I spoke far too disparagingly of your lines, and, I am ashamed to say, purposely. I should like you to specify or particularize; the story of the 'Tottering Eld,' of 'his eventful years all come and gone,' is too general; why not make him a soldier, or some character, however, in which he has been witness to frequency of 'cruel wrong and strange distress?' I think I should. When I laughed at the 'miserable man crawling from beneath the coverture,' I wonder I did not perceive that it was a laugh of horror, such as I have laughed at Dante's picture of the famished Ugolino. Without falsehood, I perceive a hundred beauties in your narrative. Yet I wonder you do not perceive something out of the way, something unsimple and artificial in the expression 'voiced a sad tale.' I hate made-dishes at the muses' banquet. I believe I was wrong in most of my other objections. But surely 'hailed him immortal' adds nothing to the terror of the man's death, which it was your business to heighten, not diminish by a phrase, which takes away all terror from it. I like that line, 'They closed their eyes in sleep, nor knew 'twas death.'

Indeed, there is scarcely a line I do not like. '*Turbid* ecstasy' is surely not so good as what you *had* written, 'troublous.' Turbid rather suits the muddy kind of inspiration which London porter confers. The versification is, throughout, to my ears, unexceptionable, with no disparagement to the measure of the 'Religious Musings,' which is exactly fitted to the thoughts.

"You were building your house on a rock when you rested your fame on that poem. I can scarce bring myself to believe that I am admitted to a familiar correspondence, and all the license of friendship, with a man who writes blank verse like Milton. Now, this is delicate flattery, *indirect* flattery. Go on with your 'Maid of Orleans,' and be content to be second to yourself. I shall become a convert to it when 'tis finished."

* * * * * *

"This afternoon I attend the funeral of my poor old aunt, who died on Thursday. I own I am thankful that the good creature has ended all her days of suffering and infirmity. She was to me the 'cherisher of infancy,' and one must fall on those occasions into reflections, which it would be commonplace to enumerate, concerning death, 'of chance and change, and fate and human life.' Good God, who could have foreseen all this but four months back! I had reckoned, in particular, on my aunt's living many years; she was a very hearty old woman. But she was a mere skeleton before she died, looked more like a corpse that had lain weeks in the grave, than one fresh dead. 'Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun; but let a man live many days and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many.' Coleridge, why are we to live on after all the strength and beauty of existence are gone, when all the life of life is fled, as Burns expresses it? Tell Lloyd I have had thoughts of turning Quaker; have been reading, or am rather just beginning to read, a most capital book, good thoughts in good language, William Penn's 'No Cross, No Crown.' I like it immensely. Unluckily, I went to one of his meetings, tell him, in St. John's-street, yesterday, and saw a man under all the agitations and workings of a fanatic, who believed himself under the influence of some 'inevitable presence.' This cured me of Quakerism; I love it in the books of Penn and Woolman, but I detest the vanity of a man thinking he speaks by the Spirit, when what he says an ordinary man might say without all that quaking and trembling. In the midst of his inspiration, and the effects of it were most noisy, was handed

into the midst of the meeting a most terrible blackguard Wapping sailor; the poor man, I believe, had rather have been in the hottest part of an engagement, for the congregation of broad brims, together with the ravings of the prophet, were too much for his gravity, though I saw even he had delicacy enough not to laugh out. And the inspired gentleman, though his manner was so supernatural, yet neither talked nor professed to talk anything more than good sober sense, common morality, with now and then a declaration of not speaking from himself. Among other things, looking back to his childhood and early youth, he told the meeting what a graceless young dog he had been, that in his youth he had a good share of wit; reader, if thou hadst seen the gentleman, thou wouldst have sworn that it must indeed have been many years ago, for his rueful physiognomy would have scared away the playful goddess from the meeting where he presided for ever. A wit! a wit! what could he mean? Lloyd, it minded me of Falkland in the rivals, 'Am I full of wit and humour? No, indeed you are not. Am I the life and soul of every company I come into? No, it cannot be said you are.' That hard-faced gentleman, a wit! Why Nature wrote on his fanatic forehead fifty years ago, 'Wit never comes that comes to all.' I should be as scandalized at a *bon mot* issuing from his oracle-looking mouth, as to see Cato go down a country-dance. God love you all. You are very good to submit to be pleased with reading my nothings. 'Tis the privilege of friendship to talk nonsense, and to have nonsense respected. Yours ever,

"C. LAMB.

"Monday."

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Your last letter was dated the 10th February; in it you promised to write again the next day. At least, I did not expect so long, so unfriend-like a silence. There was a time, Col., when a remissness of this sort in a dear friend would have lain very heavy on my mind; but latterly I have been too familiar with neglect to feel much from the semblance of it. Yet, to suspect one's self overlooked, and in the way to oblivion, is a feeling rather humbling; perhaps, as tending to self-mortification, not unfavourable to the spiritual state. Still, as you meant to confer no benefit on the soul of your friend, you do not stand quite clear from the imputation of unkindliness (a word by which I mean the diminutive of unkindness). And then David Hartley was unwell; and how is the small philosopher, the minute philosopher? and David's mother? Coleridge, I am not trifling, nor are these matter-of-fact ques-

tions only. You are all very dear and precious to me; do what you will, Col., you may hurt me and vex me by your silence, but you cannot estrange my heart from you all. I cannot scatter friendships like church farthings, nor let them drop from mine hand like hourglass-sand. I have but two or three people in the world to whom I am more than indifferent, and I can't afford to whistle them off to the winds.

"My sister has recovered from her illness. May that merciful God make tender my heart, and make me as thankful as in my distress I was earnest in my prayers. Congratulate me on an ever-present and never-alienable friend like her. And do, do insert, if you have not lost, my dedication. It will have lost its value by coming so late. If you are really going on with that volume, I shall be enabled in a day or two to send you a short poem to insert. Now, do answer this. Friendship, and acts of friendship, should be reciprocal, and free as the air: a friend should never be reduced to beg an alms of his fellow. Yet I will beg an alms: I entreat you to write, and tell me all about poor L. L., and all of you.

"God love and preserve you all.

"C. LAMB."

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"I stared with wild wonderment to see thy well-known hand again. It revived many a pleasing recollection of an epistolary intercourse, of late strangely suspended, once the pride of my life. Before I even opened thy letter, I figured to myself a sort of complacency which my little board at home would feel at receiving the new-comer into the little drawer, where I keep my treasures of this kind. You have done well in writing to me. The little room, (was it not a little one?) at the Salutation was already in the way of becoming a fading idea: it had begun to be classed in my memory with those 'wanderings with a fair-haired maid,' in the recollection of which I feel I have no property. You press me, very kindly do you press me, to come to Stowey: obstacles strong as death prevent me at present: maybe I may be able to come before the year is out: believe me, I will come as soon as I can, but I dread naming a probable time. It depends on fifty things, besides the expense, which is not nothing. As to ——, caprice may grant what caprice only refused, and it is no more hardship, rightly considered, to be dependant on him for pleasure, than to be at the mercy of the rain and sunshine for the enjoyment of a holyday. In either case we are not to look for a suspension of the laws of nature. 'Grill will be grill.' Vide Spenser.

"I could not but smile at the compromise you make with me for printing Lloyd's poems first, but there is in nature, I fear, too many tendencies to envy and jealousy not to justify you in your apology. Yet, if any one is welcome to pre-eminence from me, it is Lloyd, for he would be the last to desire it. So pray let his name *uniformly* precede mine, for it would be treating me like a child to suppose it could give me pain. Yet, alas! I am not insusceptible of the bad passions. Thank God, I have the ingenuousness to be ashamed of them. I am dearly fond of Charles Lloyd; he is all goodness, and I have too much of the world in my composition to feel myself thoroughly deserving of his friendship.

"Lloyd tells me that Sheridan put you upon writing your tragedy. I hope you are only Coleridgeizing when you talk of finishing it in a few days. Shakspeare was a more modest man, but you best know your own power.

"Of my last poem you speak slightingly; surely the longer stanzas were pretty tolerable; at least there was one good line in it.

'Thick-shaded trees, with dark green leaf rich clad.'

"To adopt your own expression, I call this a 'rich' line, a fine full line. And some others I thought even beautiful. Believe me, my litte gentleman will feel some repugnance at riding behind in the basket, though, I confess, in pretty good company. Your picture of idiocy, with the sugar-loaf head, is exquisite; but are you not too severe upon our more favoured brethren in fatuity? I send you a trifling letter; but you have only to think that I have been skimming the superfices of my mind, and found it only froth. Now, do write again; you cannot believe how I long and love always to hear about you.

"Yours most affectionately,

"CHARLES LAMB.

"Monday night."

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Did you seize the grand opportunity of seeing Kosciusko while he was at Bristol? I never saw a hero, I wonder how they look. I have been reading a most curious romance-like work, called the Life of John Buncle, Esq. 'Tis very interesting, and an extraordinary compound of all manner of subjects, from the depth of the ludicrous to the heights of sublime religious truth. There is much abstruse science in it above my cut, and an infinite fund of pleasantry. John Buncle is a famous fine man, formed in nature's most eccentric hour I

am ashamed of what I write. But I have no topic to talk of. I see nobody, and sit, and read, or walk alone, and hear nothing. I am quite lost to conversation from disuse; and out of the sphere of my little family, who, I am thankful, are dearer and dearer to me every day, I see no face that brightens up at my approach. My friends are at a distance (meaning Birmingham and Stowey); worldly hopes are at a low ebb with me, and unworldly thoughts are not yet familiarized to me, though I occasionally indulge in them. Still I feel a calm not unlike content. I think it is sometimes more akin to physical stupidity than to a heaven-flowing serenity and peace. What right have I to obtrude all this upon you? and what is such a letter to you? and, if I come to Stowey, what conversation can I furnish to compensate my friend for those stores of knowledge and of fancy; those delightful treasures of wisdom, which, I know, he will open to me? But it is better to give than to receive; and I was a very patient hearer and docile scholar in our winter evenings at Mr. May's; was I not, Col.? What I have owed to thee, my heart can ne'er forget.

"God love you and yours.

"C. L.

"Saturday."

At length the small volume containing the poems of Coleridge, Lloyd, and Lamb, was published by Mr. Cottle at Bristol. It excited little attention; but Lamb had the pleasure of seeing his dedication to his sister printed in good set form, after his own fashion, and of beholding the delight and pride with which she received it. This little book, now very scarce, had the following motto expressive of Coleridge's feeling towards his associates:—*Duplex nobis vinculum, et amicitiæ et similium junctarumque Camænarum; quod utinam neque mors solvat, neque temporis longinquitas.* Lamb's share of the work consists of eight sonnets; four short fragments of blank verse, of which the Grandame is the principal; a poem, called the Tomb of Douglas; some verses to Charles Lloyd; and a Vision of Repentance; which are all published in the last edition of his poetical works, except one of the sonnets, which was addressed to Mrs. Siddons; and the Tomb of Douglas, which was justly omitted as commonplace and vapid. They only occupy twenty-eight duodecimo pages, within which space was comprised all that Lamb at this time had written which he deemed worth preserving.

The following letter from Lamb to Coleridge seems to have been written on receiving the first copy of the work.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"I am sorry I cannot now relish your poetical present so thoroughly as I feel it deserves; but I do not the less thank Lloyd and you for it.

"Before I offer, what alone I have to offer, a few obvious remarks on the poems you sent me, I can but notice the odd coincidence of two young men, in one age, carolling their grandmothers. Love, what L. calls the 'feverish and romantic tie,' hath too long domineered over all the charities of home: the dear domestic ties of father, brother, husband. The amiable and benevolent Cowper has a beautiful passage in his 'Task'—some natural and painful reflections on his deceased parents; and Hayley's sweet lines to his mother are notoriously the best things he ever wrote. Cowper's lines, some of them are

> 'How gladly would the man recall to life
> The boy's neglected sire; a mother too!
> That softer name, perhaps more gladly still,
> Might he demand them at the gates of death.'

"I cannot but smile to see my granny so gayly decked forth; though I think whoever altered 'thy' praises to 'her' praises, 'thy honoured memory to 'her' honoured memory, did wrong—they best expressed my feelings. There is a pensive state of recollection, in which the mind is disposed to apostrophize the departed objects of its attachment; and, breaking loose from grammatical precision, changes from the first to the third, and from the third to the first person, just as the random fancy or the feeling directs. Among Lloyd's sonnets, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 11th are eminently beautiful. I think him too lavish of his expletives; the *dos* and *dids*, when they occur too often, bring a quaintness with them along with their simplicity, or rather air of antiquity, which the patrons of them seem desirous of conveying.

* * * * *

"Another time I may notice more particularly Lloyd's, Southey's, Dermody's Sonnets. I shrink from them now; my teazing lot makes me too confused for a clear judgment of things, too selfish for sympathy; and these ill-digested, meaningless remarks I have imposed on myself as a task, to lull reflection as well as to show you I did not neglect reading your valuable present. Return my acknowledgments to Lloyd; you, too, seem to be about realizing an Elysium upon earth, and, no doubt, I shall be happier. Take my best wishes. Remember me most affectionately to Mrs. C——, and give little David Hartley—God bless its little heart—a kiss for

me. Bring him up to know the meaning of his Christian name, and what that name (imposed upon him) will demand of him.

"God love you!

"C. LAMB.

"I write, for one thing, to say that I shall write no more till you send me word where you are, for you are so soon to move.

"My sister is pretty well, thank God. We think of you very often. God bless you; continue to be my correspondent, and I will strive to fancy that this world is *not* 'all barrenness.'"

After several disappointments, occasioned by the state of business at the India House, Lamb achieved his long-checked wish of visiting Coleridge at Stowey, in company with his sister, without whom he felt it almost a sin to enjoy anything. Coleridge, shortly after, abandoned his scheme of a cottage-life, and in the following year left England for Germany. Lamb, however, was not now so lonely as when he wrote to Coleridge imploring his correspondence as the only comfort of his sorrows and labours; for, through the instrumentality of Coleridge, he was now rich in friends. Among them he marked George Dyer, the guileless and simple-hearted, whose love of learning was a passion, and who found, even in the forms of verse, objects of worship; Southey, in the young vigour of his genius; and Wordsworth, the great regenerator of English poetry, preparing for his long contest with the glittering forms of inane phraseology which had usurped the dominion of the public mind, and with the cold mockeries of scorn with which their supremacy was defended. By those the beauty of his character was felt; the original cast of his powers was appreciated; and his peculiar humour was detected and kindled into fitful life.

CHAPTER IV.

[1798.]

Lamb's Literary Efforts and Correspondence with Southey.

In the year 1798, the blank verse of Lloyd and Lamb, which had been contained in the volume published in conjunction with Coleridge, was, with some additions by Lloyd, published in a thin duodecimo, price 2*s.* 6*d.*, under the title of "Blank Verse, by Charles Lloyd and Charles Lamb." This unpretending book was honoured by a brief and scornful notice in the catalogue of "The Monthly Review," in the small print of which the works of the poets who are now recognised as the greatest ornaments of their age, and who have impressed it most deeply by their genius, were usually named to be dismissed with a sneer. After a contemptuous notice of "The Mournful Muse" of Lloyd, Lamb receives his *quietus* in a line:—"Mr. Lamb, the joint author of this little volume, seems to be very properly associated with his plaintive companion."*

In this year Lamb composed his prose tale, "Rosamund Gray," and published it in a volume of the same size and price with the last, under the title of "A Tale of Rosamund Gray and Old Blind Margaret," which, having a semblance of story, sold much better than his poems, and added a few pounds to his slender income. This miniature romance is unique in English literature. It bears the impress of a recent perusal of "The Man of Feeling" and "Julia de Roubigné;" and while on the one hand it wants the graphic force and delicate touches of Mackenzie, it is informed with deeper feeling, and breathes a diviner morality than the most charming of his tales. Lamb never possessed the faculty of constructing a plot either for drama or novel; and while he luxuriated in the humour of Smollett, the wit of Fielding, or the solemn pathos of Richardson, he was not amused, but perplexed, by the attempt to tread the windings of story which conducts to their most exquisite passages through the maze of adventure. In this tale, nothing is made out with distinctness, except the rustic piety and grace of the lovely girl and her venerable grandmother, which are pictured with such earnestness and simplicity as might beseem a fragment of the Book of Ruth.

* Monthly Review, Sept., 1798.

The villain who lays waste their humble joys is a murky phantom without individuality; the events are obscured by the haze of sentiment which hovers over them; and the narrative gives way to the reflections of the author, who is mingled with the persons of the tale in visionary confusion, and gives to it the character of a sweet but disturbed dream. It has an interest now beyond that of fiction; for in it we may trace, "as in a glass darkly," the characteristics of the mind and heart of the author, at a time when a change was coming upon them. There are the dainty sense of beauty just weaned from its palpable object, and quivering over its lost images; feeling grown retrospective before its time, and tinging all things with a strange solemnity; hints of that craving after immediate appliances which might give impulse to a harassed frame, and confidence to struggling fancy, and of that escape from the pressure of agony into fantastic mirth which, in after life, made Lamb a problem to a stranger, while they endeared him a thousand-fold to those who really knew him. While the fulness of the religious sentiments and the scriptural cast of the language still partake of his early manhood, the visit of the narrator of the tale to the churchyard where his parents lie buried, after his nerves had been strung for the endeavour by wine at the village inn, and the half-frantic jollity of his old heart-broken friend (the lover of the tale) whom he met there, with the exquisite benignity of thought breathing through the whole, prophesy the delightful peculiarities and genial frailties of an after day. The reflections he makes on the eulogistic character of all the inscriptions are drawn from his own childhood; for, when a very little boy, walking with his sister in a churchyard, he suddenly asked her, "*Mary, where do the naughty people lie?*"

"Rosamund Gray" remained unreviewed till August, 1800, when it received the following notice in "The Monthly Review's" catalogue, the manufacturer of which was probably more tolerant of heterodox composition in prose than verse: "In the perusal of this pathetic and interesting story, the reader, who has a mind capable of enjoying rational and moral sentiment, will feel much gratification. Mr. Lamb has here proved himself skilful in touching the nicest feelings of the heart, and in affording great pleasure to the imagination, by exhibiting events and situations which, in the hands of a writer less conversant with the springs and energies of the *moral sense*, would make a very '*sorry figure.*'" While we acknowledge this scanty praise as a redeeming trait in the long series of critical absurdities, we cannot help observing how curiously misplaced all the laudatory epithets are; the sentiment being

profound and true, but not "*rational*," and the "springs and energies of the moral sense" being substituted for a weakness which had a power of its own!

Lamb was introduced by Coleridge to Southey as early as the year 1795; but no intimacy ensued until he accompanied Lloyd in the summer of 1797 to the little village of Burton, near Christchurch, in Hampshire, where Southey was then residing, and where they spent a fortnight as the poet's guests. After Coleridge's departure for Germany, in 1798, a correspondence began between Lamb and Southey which continued through that and part of the following year; Southey communicates to Lamb his Eclogues, which he was then preparing for the press, and Lamb repays the confidence by submitting the products of his own leisure hours to his genial critic. If Southey did not, in all respects, compensate Lamb for the absence of his earlier friend, he excited in him a more entire and active intellectual sympathy, as the character of Southey's mind bore more resemblance to his own than that of Coleridge. In purity of thought; in the love of the minutest vestige of antiquity; in a certain primness of style bounding in the rich humour which threatened to overflow it, they were nearly akin; both alike reverenced childhood, and both had preserved its best attributes unspotted from the world. If Lamb bowed to the genius of Coleridge with a fonder reverence, he felt more at home with Southey; and although he did not pour out the inmost secrets of his soul in his letters to him as to Coleridge, he gave more scope to the "first sprightly runnings" of his humorous fancy. Here is the first of his freaks:—

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"My tailor has brought me home a new coat lapelled, with a velvet collar. He assures me everybody wears velvet collars now. Some are born fashionable, some achieve fashion, and others, like your humble servant, have fashion thrust upon them. The rogue has been making inroads hitherto by modest degrees, foisting upon me an additional button, recommending gaiters, but to come upon me thus in a full tide of luxury neither becomes him as a tailor nor the ninth of a man. My meek gentleman was robbed the other day, coming with his wife and family in a one-horse shay from Hampstead; the villains rifled him of four guineas, some shillings and halfpence, and a bundle of customers' measures, which they swore were bank notes. They did not shoot him, and when they rode off he addressed them with profound gratitude, making a congee; 'Gentlemen, I wish you good-night, and we are very much obliged to you that you have not used us ill!' And this

is the cuckoo that has had the audacity to foist upon me ten buttons on a side, and a black velvet collar. A cursed ninth of a scoundrel!"

* * * * * *

"When you write to Lloyd, he wishes his Jacobin correspondents to address him as *Mr.* C. L."

The following letter—yet richer in fun—bears date Saturday, July 28, 1798. In order to make its allusions intelligible, it is only necessary to mention that Southey was then contemplating a calendar illustrative of the remarkable days of the year.

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"I am ashamed that I have not thanked you before this for the 'Joan of Arc,' but I did not know your address, and it did not occur to me to write through Cottle. The poem delighted me, and the notes amused me; but methinks she of Neufchatel, in the print, holds her sword too 'like a dancer.' I sent your *notice* to Phillips, particularly requesting an immediate insertion, but I suppose it came too late. I am sometimes curious to know what progress you make in that same 'Calendar,' whether you insert the nine worthies and Whittington; what you do or how you can manage when two saints meet and quarrel for precedency; Martlemas, and Candlemas, and Christmas are glorious themes for a writer like you, antiquity-bitten, smitten with the love of boars' heads and rosemary; but how you can ennoble the first of April I know not. By-the-way, I had a thing to say, but a certain false modesty has hitherto prevented me: perhaps I can best communicate my wish by a hint—my birthday is on the 10th of February, new style; but if it interferes with any remarkable event, why, rather than my country should lose her fame, I care not if I put my nativity back eleven days. Fine family patronage for your 'Calendar,' if that old lady of prolific memory were living, who lies (or lyes) in some church in London (saints forgive me, but I have forgot *what* church), attesting that enormous legend of as many children as days in the year. I marvel her impudence did not grasp at a leap year. Three hundred and sixty-five dedications, and all in a family—you might spit in spirit on the oneness of Mecænas patronage!

"Samuel Taylor Coleridge, to the eternal regret of his native Devonshire, emigrates to Westphalia. 'Poor Lamb (these were his last words), if he wants any *knowledge*, he may apply to me;' in ordinary cases I thanked him, I have an 'Encyclopedia' at hand; but on such an occasion as going over to a

German university, I could not refrain from sending him the following propositions, to be by him defended or oppugned (or both) at Leipsic or Gottingen.

THESES QUÆDAM THEOLOGICÆ.

I.

"Whether God loves a lying angel better than a true man?

II.

"Whether the Archangel Uriel *could* knowingly affirm an untruth, and whether, if he *could*, he *would?*

III.

"Whether honesty be an angelic virtue, or not rather belonging to that class of qualities which the schoolmen term 'virtutes minus splendidæ, et hominis et terræ nimis participes?'

IV.

"Whether the seraphim ardentes do not manifest their goodness by the way of vision and theory? and whether practice be not a sub-celestial, and merely human virtue?

V.

"Whether the higher order of seraphim illuminati ever *sneer?*

VI.

"Whether pure intelligences can *love*, or whether they can love anything besides pure intellect?

VII.

"Whether the beatific vision be anything more or less than a perpetual representment to each individual angel of his own present attainments and future capabilities, something in the manner of mortal looking-glasses?

VIII.

"Whether an 'immortal and amenable soul' may not come *to be damned at last, and the man never suspect it beforehand?*

"Samuel Taylor hath not deigned an answer; was it impertinent in me to avail myself of that offered source of knowledge?

"Wishing Madoc may be born into the world with as splendid promise as the second birth or purification of the Maid of Neufchatel, I remain yours sincerely,

"C. Lamb.

"I hope Edith is better; my kindest remembrances to her. You have a good deal of trifling to forgive in this letter. Love and respects to Cottle."

The two next fragments of letters to Southey illustrate strikingly the restless kindness and exquisite spirit of allowance in Lamb's nature; the first an earnest pleading for a poor fellow whose distress actually haunted him; the second an affecting allusion to the real goodness of a wild, untoward schoolmate, and fine self-reproval—in this instance how unmerited!

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"Dear Southey—Your friend, John May, has formerly made kind offers to Lloyd of serving me in the India House, by the interest of his friend, Sir Francis Baring. It is not likely that I shall ever put his goodness to the test on my own account, for my prospects are very comfortable. But I know a man, a young man, whom he could serve through the same channel, and, I think, would be disposed to serve if he were acquainted with his case. This poor fellow (whom I know just enough of to vouch for his strict integrity and worth) has lost two or three employments from illness which he cannot regain; he was once insane, and, from the distressful uncertainty of his livelihood, has reason to apprehend a return of that malady. He has been for some time dependant on a woman, whose lodger he formerly was, but who can ill afford to maintain him; and I know that on Christmas night last he actually walked about the streets all night rather than accept of her bed, which she offered him, and offered herself to sleep in the kitchen; and that, in consequence of that severe cold, he is labouring under a bilious disorder, besides a depression of spirits, which incapacitates him from exertion when he most needs it. For God's sake, Southey, if it does not go against you to ask favours, do it now; ask it as for me; but do not do a violence to your feelings, because he does not know of this application, and will suffer no disappointment. What I meant to say was this—there are in the India House what are called *extra clerks*, not on the establishment like me, but employed in extra business, by-jobs; these get about £50 a year, or rather more, but never rise; a director can put in at any time a young man in this office, and it is by no means considered so great a favour as making an established clerk. He would think himself as rich as an emperor if he could get such a certain situation, and be relieved from those disquietudes which, I do fear, may one day bring back his distemper.

German university, I could not refrain from sending him the following propositions, to be by him defended or oppugned (or both) at Leipsic or Gottingen.

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"Wishing Madoc may be born into the world with as splendid promise as the second birth or purification of the Maid of Neufchatel, I remain yours sincerely,

"C. LAMB.

or the frequent roughness of his verse. His delicate sense of beauty had found a congenial organ in the style which he tasted with rapture; and criticism gave him little encouragement to adapt it to the frigid insipidities of the time. "My tragedy," says he, in the first letter to Southey which alludes to the play, "will be a medley (I intend it to be a medley) of laughter and tears, prose and verse, and, in some places, rhyme; songs, wit, pathos, humour; and, if possible, sublimity; at least, 'tis not a fault in my intention if it does not comprehend most of these discordant atoms: Heaven send they dance not the dance of death!" In another letter he there introduces the delicious rhymed passage in the "Forest Scene," which Godwin, having accidentally seen quoted, took for a choice fragment of some old dramatist, and went to Lamb to assist him in finding the author.

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"I just send you a few rhymes from my play, the only rhymes in it. A forest-liver giving an account of his amusements.

'What sports have you in the forest?
Not many—some few—as thus:
To see the sun to bed, and see him rise,
Like some hot amourist with glowing eyes,
Bursting the lazy bands of sleep that bound him;
With all his fires and travelling glories round him:
Sometimes the moon on soft night-clouds to rest,
Like beauty nestling in a young man's breast.
And all the winking stars, her handmaids, keep
Admiring silence, while those lovers sleep:
Sometimes outstretch'd in very idleness,
Naught doing, saying little, thinking less,
To view the leaves, thin dancers upon air,
Go eddying round; and small birds how they fare,
When mother autumn fills their beaks with corn,
Filch'd from the careless Amathea's horn;
And how the woods berries and worms provide,
Without their pains, when earth hath naught beside
To answer their small wants;
To view the graceful deer come trooping by,
Then pause, and gaze, then turn they know not why,
Like bashful younkers in society;
To mark the structure of a plant or tree;
And all fair things of earth, how fair they be!' &c., &c.

"I love to anticipate charges of unoriginality: the first line is almost Shakspeare's:—

'To have my love to bed and to arise.'
Midsummer's Night's Dream.

"I think there is a sweetness in the versification not unlike some rhymes in that exquisite play, and the last line but three is yours:—

'An eye,
That met the gaze, or turn'd it knew not why.'
Rosamund's Epistle.

"I shall anticipate all my play, and have nothing to show you. An idea for Leviathan—commentators on Job have been puzzled to find out a meaning for Leviathan—'tis a whale, say some; a crocodile, say others. In my simple conjecture, Leviathan is neither more nor less than the Lord Mayor of London for the time being."

* * * * * *

He seems also to have sent, about this time, the solemnly fantastic poem of the "Witch," as the following passage relates to one of its conceits:—

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"Your recipe for a Turk's poison is invaluable, and truly Marlowish. Lloyd objects to 'shutting up the womb of his purse' in my curse (which, for a Christian witch in a Christian country, is not too mild, I hope); do you object? I think there is a strangeness in the idea, as well as 'shaking the poor like snakes from his door,' which suits the speaker. Witches illustrate, as fine ladies do, from their own familiar objects, and snakes and shutting up of wombs are in their way. I don't know that this last charge has been before brought against 'em, nor either the sour milk or the mandrake babe; but I affirm these be things a witch would do if she could."

Here is a specimen of Lamb's criticism on Southey's poetical communications.

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"I have read your Eclogue repeatedly, and cannot call it bald or without interest; the cast of it and the design are completely original, and may set people upon thinking: it is as poetical as the subject requires, which asks no poetry; but it is defective in pathos. The woman's own story is the tamest part of it; I should like you to remould that; it too much resembles the young maid's history; both had been in service. Even the omission would not injure the poem; after the words 'growing wants' you might, not unconnectedly, introduce 'look at that little chub' down to 'welcome one;' and, decidedly, I would have you end it somehow thus, 'Give them, at least this evening, a good meal (gives her money); now, fare thee well: hereafter you have taught me to give sad meaning to the village-bells,' &c., which would leave a stronger impression (as well as more pleasingly recall the

beginning of the Eclogue) than the present commonplace erence to a better world, which the woman 'must have h at church.' I should like you, too, a good deal to enlarge most striking part, as it might have been, of the poem—'l idleness?' &c., that affords a good field for dwelling on si ness, and inabilities, and old age. And you might also a g deal enrich the piece with a picture of a country wedding: woman might very well, in a transient fit of oblivion, dwell u the ceremony and circumstances of her own nuptials six ye ago, the snugness of the bridegroom, the feastings, the che merriment, the welcomings, and the secret envyings of t maidens—then, dropping all this, recur to her present lot. do not know that I can suggest anything else, or that I ha suggested anything new or material. I shall be very glad see some more poetry, though, I fear, your trouble in tra scribing will be greater than the service my remarks may e them.

"Yours affectionately,

"C. LAMB.

"I cut my letter short because I am called off to business.'

The following, of the same character, is further interestin as tracing the origin of his "Rosamund," and exhibiting hi young enthusiasm for the old English drama so nobly devel oped in his "Specimens:"—

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"Dear Southey—I thank you heartily for the Eclogue; i pleases me mightily, being so full of picture-work and circumstances. I find no fault in it, unless, perhaps, that Joanna's ruin is a catastrophe too trite: and this is not the first or second time you have clothed your indignation, in verse, in a tale of ruined innocence. The old lady, spinning in the sun, I hope, would not disdain to claim some kindred with old Margaret. I could almost wish you to vary some circumstances in the conclusion. A gentleman seducer has often been described in prose and verse; what if you had accomplished Joanna's ruin by the clumsy arts and rustic gifts of some country fellow? I am thinking, I believe, of the song,

'An old woman clothed in gray,
Whose daughter was charming and young,
And she was deluded away
By Roger's false flattering tongue.'

A Roger-Lothario would be a novel character; I think you might paint him very well. You may think this a very silly suggestion, and so indeed it is; but, in good truth, nothing else

but the first words of that foolish ballad put me upon scribbling my 'Rosamund.' But I thank you heartily for the poem. Not having anything of my own to send you in return—though, to tell truth, I am at work upon something, which, if I were to cut away and garble, perhaps I might send you an extract or two that might not displease you; but I will not do that; and whether it will come to anything, I know not, for I am as slow as a Fleming painter when I compose anything—I will crave leave to put down a few lines of old Christopher Marlow's; I take them from his tragedy, 'The Jew of Malta.' The Jew is a famous character, quite out of nature; but, when we consider the terrible idea our simple ancestors had of a Jew, not more to be discommended for a certain discolouring (I think Addison calls it) than the witches and fairies of Marlow's mighty successor. The scene is between Barabas, the Jew, and Ithamore, a Turkish captive, exposed to sale for a slave.

BARABAS.

(*A precious rascal.*)

'As for myself, I walk abroad a nights,
And kill sick people groaning under walls:
Sometimes I go about, and poison wells;
And now and then, to cherish Christian thieves,
I am content to lose some of my crowns,
That I may, walking in my gallery,
See 'm go pinion'd along by my door.
Being young, I studied physic, and began
To practise first upon the Italian:
There I enrich'd the priests with burials,
And always kept the sexton's arms in use
With digging graves, and ringing dead men's knells;
And, after that, was I an engineer,
And in the wars 'tween France and Germany,
Under pretence of serving Charles the Fifth,
Slew friend and enemy with my stratagems.
Then after that was I a usurer,
And with extorting, cozening, forfeiting,
And tricks belonging unto brokery,
I fill'd the jail with bankrupts in a year,
And with young orphans planted hospitals,
And every moon made some or other mad;
And now and then one hang himself for grief,
Pinning upon his breast a long great scroll,
How I with interest had tormented him.'

(Now hear Ithamore, the other gentle nature.)

ITHAMORE.

(*A comical dog.*)

'Faith, master, and I have spent my time
In setting Christian villages on fire,
Chaining of eunuchs, binding galley-slaves.
One time I was an hostler in an inn,

And in the nighttime secretly would I steal
To travellers' chambers, and there cut their throats.
Once at Jerusalem, where the pilgrims kneel'd,
I strew'd powder on the marble stones,
And therewithal their knees would rankle so,
That I have laugh'd a good to see the cripples
Go limping home to Christendom on stilts.'

BARABAS.

'Why, this is something—'

"There is a mixture of the ludicrous and the terrible in these lines, brimful of genius and antique invention, that at first reminded me of your old description of cruelty in hell.

* * * * * *

"I am glad you have put me on the scent after old Quarles. If I do not put up those eclogues, and that shortly, say I am no true-nosed hound."

The following letters, which must have been written after a short interval, show a rapid change of opinion, very unusual with Lamb (who stuck to his favourite books as he did to his friends), as to the relative merits of the "Emblems" of Wither, and of Quarles:—

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"I perfectly accord with your opinion of old Wither; Quarles is a wittier writer, but Wither lays more hold of the heart. Quarles thinks of his audience when he lectures; Wither soliloquizes in company from a full heart. What wretched stuff are the 'Divine Fancies' of Quarles! Religion appears to him no longer valuable than it furnishes matter for quibbles and riddles; he turns God's grace into wantonness. Wither is like an old friend, whose warm-heartedness and estimable qualities make us wish he possessed more genius, but at the same time make us willing to dispense with that want. I always love W., and sometimes admire Q. Still that portrait poem is a fine one; and the extract from 'Shepherds' Hunting' places him in a starry height far above Quarles. If you wrote that review in 'Crit. Rev.,' I am sorry you are so sparing of praise to the Ancient Marinere; so far from calling it as you do, with some wit, but more severity, 'A Dutch attempt,' &c., I call it a right English attempt, and a successful one, to dethrone German sublimity. You have selected a passage fertile in unmeaning miracles, but have passed by fifty passages as miraculous as the miracles they celebrate. I never so deeply felt the pathetic as in that part,

'A spring of love gush'd from my heart,
And I bless'd them unaware'—

It stung me into high pleasure through sufferings. Lloyd does not like it; his head is too metaphysical, and your taste too correct; at least I must allege something against you both to excuse my own dotage—

> 'So lonely 'twas that God himself
> Scarce seemed there to be!!' &c., &c.

But you allow some elaborate beauties; you should have extracted 'em. 'The Ancient Marinere' play smore tricks with the mind than that last poem, which is yet one of the finest written. But I am getting too dogmatical; and, before I degenerate into abuse, I will conclude with assuring you that I am

"Sincerely yours,

"C. LAMB.

"I am going to meet Lloyd at Ware, on Saturday, to return on Sunday. Have you any commands or commendations to the metaphysician? I shall be very happy if you will dine or spend any time with me in your way through the great ugly city; but I know you have other ties upon you in these parts.

"Love and respects to Edith, and friendly remembrances to Cottle."

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"Dear Southey—I have at last been so fortunate as to pick up Wither's Emblems for you, that 'old book and quaint,' as the brief author of Rosamund Gray hath it; it is in a most detestable state of preservation, and the cuts are of a fainter impression than I have seen. Some child, the curse of antiquaries and bane of bibliopical rarities, hath been dabbling in some of them with its paint and dirty fingers; and, in particular, hath a little sullied the author's own portraiture, which I think valuable, as the poem that accompanies it is no common one, this last excepted; the Emblems are far inferior to old Quarles. I once told you otherwise, but I had not then read old Q. with attention. I have picked up, too, another copy of Quarles for ninepence!!! O tempora! O lectores! so that, if you have lost or parted with your own copy, say so, and I can furnish you, for you prize these things more than I do. You will be amused, I think, with honest Wither's 'Supersedeas to all them whose custom it is, without any deserving, to importune authors to give unto them their books.' I am sorry 'tis imperfect, as the lottery board annexed to it also is. Methinks you might modernize and elegantize the Supersedeas, and place it in front of your Joan of Arc, as a gentle hint to Messrs. P——, &c. One of the happiest emblems and comicalest cuts is the owl and little chirpers, page 63.

"Wishing you all amusement, which your true emblem-

fancier can scarce fail to find in even bad emblems, I remain your caterer to command,

" C. LAMB.

" Love and respects to Edith. I hope she is well. How does your Calendar prosper?"

In this year Mr. Cottle proposed to publish an annual volume of fugitive poetry by various hands, under the title of the " Annual Anthology;" to which Coleridge and Southey were principal contributors, the first volume of which was published in the following year. To this little work Lamb contributed a short religious effusion in blank verse, entitled " Living without God in the World." The following letter to Southey refers to this poem by its first words, " Mystery of God," and recurs to the rejected sonnet to his sister; and alludes to an intention, afterward changed, of entitling the proposed collection " Gleanings."

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

" I can have no objection to your printing 'Mystery of God' with my name, and all due acknowledgments for the honour and favour of the communication; indeed, 'tis a poem that can dishonour no name. Now that is in the true strain of modern modesto-vanitas. . . But for the sonnet, I heartily wish it, as I thought it was, dead and forgotten. If the exact circumstances under which I wrote could be known or told, it would be an interesting sonnet; but, to an indifferent and stranger reader, it must appear a very bald thing, certainly inadmissible in a compilation. I wish you could affix a different name to the volume; there is a contemptible book, a wretched assortment of vapid feelings, entitled '*Pratt's Gleanings*,' which hath damned and impropriated the title for ever. Pray think of some other. The gentleman is better known (better had he remained unknown) by an Ode to Benevolence, written and spoken for and at the annual dinner of the Humane Society, who walk in procession once a year, with all the objects of their charity before them, to return God thanks for giving them such benevolent hearts."

* * * * * *

At this time Lamb's most intimate associates were Lloyd and Jem White, the author of the Falstaff Letters. When Lloyd was in town, he and White lodged in the same house, and were fast friends, though no two men could be more unlike, Lloyd having no drollery in his nature, and White nothing else. " You will easily understand," observes Mr. Southey,

in a letter with which he favoured the publisher, "how Lamb could sympathize with both."

The literary association of Lamb with Coleridge and Southey drew down upon him the hostility of the young scorners of the "Anti-Jacobin," who, luxuriating in boyish pride and aristocratic patronage, tossed the arrows of their wit against all charged with innovation, whether in politics or poetry, and cared little whom they wounded. No one could be more innocent than Lamb of political heresy; no one more strongly opposed to new theories in morality, which he always regarded with disgust; and yet he not only shared in the injustice which accused his friends of the last, but was confounded in the charge of the first, his only crime being that he had published a few poems deeply coloured with religious enthusiasm, in conjunction with two other men of genius, who were dazzled by the glowing phantoms which the French revolution had raised. The very first number of the "Anti-Jacobin Magazine and Review" was adorned by a caricature of Gilray's, in which Coleridge and Southey were introduced with asses' heads, and Lloyd and Lamb as toad and frog. In the number for July appeared the well-known poem of the "New Morality," in which all the prominent objects of the hatred of these champions of religion and order were introduced as offering homage to Le paux, a French charlatan, of whose existence Lamb had never even heard.

"Couriers and Stars, sedition's evening host,
Thou Morning Chronicle and Morning Post,
Whether ye make the 'Rights of Man' your theme,
Your country libel, and your God blaspheme,
Or dirt on private worth and virtue throw,
Still *blasphemous or blackguard*, praise Lepaux.

And ye five other wand'ring bards that move
In sweet accord of harmony and love,
C——dge and S—th—y, L—d, and L—b, & Co.,
Tune all your mystic harps to praise Lepaux!"

Not content with thus confounding persons of the most opposite opinions and the most various characters in one common libel, the party returned to the charge in the number for September, and thus denounced the young poets, in a parody on the "Ode to the Passions," under the title of "The Anarchists."

"Next H—lc—ft vow'd, in doleful tone,
No more to fire a thankless age:
Oblivion mark'd his labours for her own,
Neglected from the press, and damn'd upon the stage.

See! faithful to their mighty dam,
C——dge, S—th—y, L—d, and L—b

In splay-foot madrigals of love,
Soft moaning like the widow'd dove,
Pour, side by side, their sympathetic notes;

Of equal rights, and civic feasts,
And tyrant kings, and knavish priests,
Swift through the land the tuneful mischief floats.
And now to softer strains they struck the lyre,
They sung the beetle or the mole,
The dying kid, or ass's foal,
By cruel man permitted to expire."

These effusions have the palliation which the excess of sportive wit, impelled by youthful spirits, and fostered by the applause of the great, brings with it; but it will be difficult to palliate the coarse malignity of a passage in the prose department of the same work, in which the writer added to a statement that Mr. Coleridge was dishonoured at Cambridge for preaching Deism: "Since then he has left his native country, commenced citizen of the world, left his poor children fatherless, and his wife destitute. *Ex his disce*, his friends Lamb and Southey." It was surely rather too much, even for partisans, when denouncing their political opponents as men who "dirt on private worth and virtue threw," thus to slander two young men of the most exemplary character—one of an almost puritanical exactness of demeanour and conduct, and the other persevering in a life of noble self-sacrifice, checkered only by the frailties of a sweet nature, which endeared him even to those who were not admitted to the intimacy necessary to appreciate the touching example of his severer virtues!

If Lamb's acquaintance with Coleridge and Southey procured for him the scorn of the more virulent of the Anti-Jacobin party, he showed, by his intimacy with another distinguished object of their animosity, that he was not solicitous to avert it. He was introduced by Mr. Coleridge to one of the most remarkable persons of that stirring time—the author of "Caleb Williams" and of the "Political Justice." The first meeting between Lamb and Godwin did not wear a promising aspect. Lamb grew warm as the conviviality of the evening advanced, and indulged in some freaks of humour which had not been dreamed of in Godwin's philosophy; and the philosopher, forgetting the equanimity with which he usually looked on the vicissitudes of the world or the whist-table, broke into an allusion to Gilray's caricature, and asked, "Mr. Lamb, are you both *toad and frog?*" Coleridge was apprehensive of a rupture; but, calling the next morning on Lamb, he found Godwin seated at breakfast with him; and an interchange of civilities and card-parties was established, which lasted through the life of Lamb, whom Godwin only survived a few months. Indifferent altogether to the politics of the age, Lamb could

not help being struck with productions of its newborn energies, so remarkable as the works and the character of Godwin. He seemed to realize in himself what Wordsworth long afterward described, "the central calm at the heart of all agitation." Through the medium of his mind the stormy convulsions of society were seen "silent as in a picture." Paradoxes the most daring wore the air of deliberate wisdom as he pronounced them. He foretold the future happiness of mankind, not with the inspiration of the poet, but with the grave and passionless voice of the oracle. There was nothing better calculated at once to feed and to make steady the enthusiasm of youthful patriots than the high speculations in which he taught them to engage on the nature of social evils and the great destiny of his species. No one would have suspected the author of those wild theories, which startled the wise and shocked the prudent, in the calm, gentlemanly person who rarely said anything above the most gentle commonplace, and took interest in little beyond the whist-table. His peculiar opinions were entirely subservient to his love of letters. He thought any man who had written a book had attained a superiority over his fellows which placed him in another class, and could scarcely understand other distinctions. Of all his works Lamb liked his "Essay on Sepulchres" the best—a short development of a scheme for preserving in one place the memory of all great writers deceased, and assigning to each his proper station—quite chimerical in itself, but accompanied with solemn and touching musings on life, and death, and fame imbodied in a style of singular refinement and beauty.

CHAPTER V.

[1799, 1800.]

Letters to Southey, Coleridge, Manning, and Wordsworth.

THE year 1799 found Lamb engaged during his leisure hours in completing his tragedy of John Woodvil, which seems to have been finished about Christmas, and transmitted to Mr. Kemble. Like all young authors, who are fascinated by the splendour of theatrical representations, he longed to see his conceptions imbodied on the stage, and to receive his immediate reward in the sympathy of a crowd of excited spectators. The hope was vain; but it cheered him in many a

lonely hour, and inspired him to write when exhausted with the business of the day, and when the less powerful stimulus of the press would have been insufficient to rouse him. In the mean time he continued to correspond with Mr. Southey, to send him portions of his play, and to reciprocate criticisms with him. The following three letters, addressed to Mr. Southey in the spring of this year, require no commentary.

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

* * * * * *

"I am to blame for not writing to you before on *my own account;* but I know you can dispense with the expressions of gratitude, or I should have thanked you before for all May's kindness.* He has liberally supplied the person I spoke to you of with money, and had procured him a situation just after himself had lighted upon a similar one, and engaged too far to recede. But May's kindness was the same, and my thanks to you and him are the same. May went about on this business as if it had been his own. But you knew John May before this, so I will be silent.

"I shall be very glad to hear from you, when convenient. I do not know how your Calendar and other affairs thrive; but, above all, I have not heard a great while of your Madoc —the *opus magnum.* I would willingly send you something to give a value to this letter; but I have only one slight passage to send you, scarce worth the sending, which I want to edge in somewhere into my play, which, by-the-way, hath not received the addition of ten lines, besides, since I saw you. A father, old Walter Woodvil (the witch's PROTÉGÉ), relates this of his son John, who 'fought in adverse armies,' being a royalist, and his father a parliamentary man.

"I saw him in the day of Worcester fight,
Whither he came at twice seven years,
Under the discipline of the Lord Falkland
(His uncle by the mother's side,
Who gave his youthful politics a bent
Quite *from* the principles of his father's house);
There did I see this valiant Lamb of Mars,
This sprig of honour, this unbearded John,
This veteran in green years, this sprout, this Woodvil
(With dreadless ease guiding a fire-hot steed,
Which seemed to scorn the manage of a boy),
Prick forth with such a *mirth* into the field,
To mingle rivalship and acts of war
Even with the sinewy masters of the art—
You would have thought the work of blood had been
A play-game merely, and the rabid Mars
Had put his harmful hostile nature off,
To instruct raw youth in images of war,
And practice of the unedged players' foils.

* See *ante*, p. 56.

The rough fanatic and blood-practised soldiery,
Seeing such hope and virtue in the boy,
Disclosed their ranks to let him pass unhurt,
Checking their swords' uncivil injuries,
As loath to mar that curious workmanship
Of Valour's beauty portrayed in his face.'

"Lloyd objects to 'portrayed in his face,' do you? I like the line.

"I shall clap this in somewhere. I think there is a spirit through the lines; perhaps the seventh, eighth, and ninth owe their origin to Shakspeare, though no image is borrowed. He says in Henry the Fourth—

'This infant Hotspur,
Mars in swathing clothes.'

But, pray, did Lord Falkland die before Worcester fight? In that case I must make bold to unclify some other nobleman.

"Kind love and respects to Edith.

"C. LAMB."

* * * * * *

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"I am hugely pleased with your 'Spider,' 'your old freemason,' as you call him. The three first stanzas are delicious; they seem to me a compound of Burns and old Quarles, those kind of homestrokes, where more is felt than strikes the ear; a terseness, a jocular pathos, which makes one feel in laughter. The measure, too, is novel and pleasing. I could almost wonder Rob. Burns, in his lifetime, never stumbled upon it. The fourth stanza is less striking, as being less original. The fifth falls off. It has no felicity of phrase, no oldfashioned phrase or feeling.

'Young hopes, and love's delightful dreams,'

savour neither of Burns nor Quarles; they seem more like shreds of many a modern sentimental sonnet. The last stanza hath nothing striking in it if I except the two concluding lines, which are Burns all over. I wish, if you concur with me, these things could be looked to. I am sure this is a kind of writing which comes tenfold better recommended to the heart, comes there more like a neighbour or familiar, than thousands of Hamnels, and Zillahs, and Madelons. I beg you will send me the 'Holly-tree,' if it at all resemble this, for it must please me. I have never seen it. I love this sort of poems, that open a new intercourse with the most despised of the animal and insect race. I think this vein may be further opened. Peter Pindar hath very prettily apostrophized a fly; Burns hath his mouse and his louse; Cole-

ridge less successfully hath made overtures of intimacy to a jackass, therein only following, at unresembling distance, Sterne and greater Cervantes. Besides these, I know of no other examples of breaking down the partition between us and our 'poor earthborn companions.' It is sometimes revolting to be put in a track of feeling by other people, not one's own immediate thoughts, else I would persuade you, if I could, I am in earnest, to commence a series of these animal poems, which might have a tendency to rescue some poor creatures from the antipathy of mankind. Some thoughts come across me; for instance—to a rat, to a toad, to a cockchafer, to a mole—people bake moles alive by a slow oven-fire to cure consumption—rats are, indeed, the most despised and contemptible parts of God's earth. I killed a rat the other day by punching him to pieces, and feel a weight of blood upon me to this hour. Toads, you know, are made to fly, and tumble down, and crush all to pieces. Cockchafers are old sport; then, again, to a worm, with an apostrophe to anglers, those patient tyrants, meek inflictors of pangs intolerable, cool devils; to an owl; to all snakes, with an apology for their poison; to a cat in boots or bladders. Your own fancy, if it takes a fancy to these hints, will suggest many more. A series of such poems, suppose them accompanied with plates descriptive of animal torments, cooks roasting lobsters, fishmongers crimping scates, &c., &c., would take excessively. I will willingly enter into a partnership in the plan with you; I think my heart and soul would go with it too—at least, give it a thought. My plan is but this minute come into my head; but it strikes me instantaneously as something new, good, and useful, full of pleasure, and full of moral. If old Quarles and Wither could live again, we would invite them into our firm. Burns hath done his part.

* * * * * *

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"Dear Southey—I have received your little volume, for which I thank you, though I do not entirely approve of this sort of intercourse, where the presents are all on one side. I have read the last Eclogue again with great pleasure. It hath gained considerably by abridgment, and now I think it wants nothing but enlargement. You will call this one of tyrant Procrustes' criticisms, to cut and pull so to his own standard; but the old lady is so great a favourite with me, I want to hear more of her; and of 'Joanna' you have given us still less. But the picture of the rustics leaning over the bridge, and the old lady travelling abroad on summer evening to see

her garden watered, are images so new and true, that I decidedly prefer this 'Ruined Cottage' to any poem in the book. Indeed, I think it the only one that will bear comparison with your 'Hymn to the Penates,' in a former volume.

"I compare dissimilar things as one would a rose and a star, for the pleasure they give us, or as a child soon learns to choose between a cake and a rattle; for dissimilars have mostly some points of comparison. The next best poem, I think, is the first Eclogue; 'tis very complete, and abounding in little pictures and realities. The remainder Eclogues, excepting only the 'Funeral,' I do not greatly admire. I miss *one*, which had at least as good a title to publication as the 'Witch' or the 'Sailor's Mother.' You called it the 'Last of the Family.' The 'Old Woman of Berkeley' comes next; in some humours I would give it the preference above any. But who the devil is Matthew of Westminster? You are as familiar with these antiquated monastics as Swedenborg, or, as his followers affect to call him, the Baron, with his invisibles. But you have raised a very comic effect out of the true narrative of Matthew of Westminster. 'Tis surprising with how little addition you have been able to convert, with so little alteration, his incidents, meant for terror, into circumstances and food for spleen. The Parody is *not* so successful; it has one famous line, indeed, which conveys the finest deathbed scene I ever met with.

'The doctor whisper'd the nurse, and the surgeon knew what he said.'

But the offering the bride three times bears not the slightest analogy or proportion to the fiendish noises three times heard! In 'Jaspar,' the circumstance of the great light is very affecting. But I had heard you mention it before. The 'Rose' is the only insipid piece in the volume; it hath neither thorns nor sweetness; and, besides, sets all chronology and probability at defiance.

"'Cousin Margaret,' you know, I like. The allusions to the Pilgrim's Progress are particularly happy, and harmonize tacitly and delicately with old cousins and aunts. To familiar faces we do associate familiar scenes and accustomed objects; but what hath Apollidon and his sea-nymphs to do in these affairs? Apollyon I could have borne, though he stands for the devil, but who is Apollidon? I think you are too apt to conclude faintly with some cold moral, as in the end of the poem called 'The Victory'—

'Be thou her comforter, who art the widow's friend;'

a single commonplace line of comfort, which bears no proportion in weight or number to the many lines which describe

suffering. This is to convert religion into mediocre feelings, which should burn, and glow, and tremble. A moral should be wrought into the body and soul, the matter and tendency of a poem, not tagged to the end, like a 'God send the good ship into harbour' at the conclusion of our bills of lading. The finishing of the 'Sailor' is also imperfect. Any dissenting minister may say and do as much.

"These remarks, I know, are crude and unwrought, but I do not lay claim to much accurate thinking. I never judge system-wise of things, but fasten often upon particulars. After all, there is a great deal in the book that I must, for time, leave *unmentioned*, to deserve my thanks for its own sake, as well as for the friendly remembrances implied in the gift. I again return you my thanks.

"Pray present my love to Edith.

"C. LAMB."

In the summer Lamb revisited the scenes in Hertfordshire, where, in his grandmother's time, he had spent so many happy holydays. In the following letter he just hints at feelings which, many years after, he so beautifully developed in those essays of "Elia"—"Blakesmoor House" and "Mackery End."

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"Dear Southey—I have but just got your letter, being returned from Herts., where I have passed a few red-letter days with much pleasure. I would describe the country to you, as you have done by Devonshire, but, alas! I am a poor pen at that same. I could tell you of an old house with a tapestry bedroom, the judgment of Solomon composing one panel, and Actæon spying Diana naked the other. I could tell of an old marble hall with Hogarth's prints, and the Roman Cæsars in marble hung round. I could tell of a *wilderness*, and of a village church, and where the bones of my honoured grandam lie; but there are feelings which refuse to be translated, sulky aborigines, which will not be naturalized in another soil. Of this nature are old family faces and scenes of infancy.

"I have given your address and the books you want to the A——'s; they will send them as soon as they can get them, but they do not seem quite familiar to their names. I shall have nothing to communicate, I fear, to the Anthology. You shall have some fragments of my play, if you desire them, but I think I had rather print it whole. Have you seen it? or shall I lend you a copy? I want your opinion of it.

"I must get to business, so farewell; my kind remembrances to Edith."

In the autumn of this year Lamb's choice list of friends received a most important addition in Mr. Thomas Manning, then a mathematical tutor at Cambridge; of whom he became a frequent correspondent, and to whom he remained strongly attached through life. Lloyd had become a graduate of the university, and to his introduction Lamb was indebted for Manning's friendship. The following letters will show how earnestly, yet how modestly, Lamb sought it.

TO MR. MANNING.

"Dear Manning—The particular kindness, even up to a degree of attachment, which I have experienced from you, seems to claim some distinct acknowledgment on my part. I could not content myself with a bare remembrance to you, conveyed in some letter to Lloyd.

"Will it be agreeable to you if I occasionally recruit your memory of me, which else must soon fade, if you consider the brief intercourse we have had? I am not likely to prove a troublesome correspondent. My scribbling days are past. I shall have no sentiments to communicate but as they spring up from some living and worthy occasion.

"I look forward with great pleasure to the performance of your promise, that we should meet in London early in the ensuing year. The century must needs commence auspiciously for me, that brings with it Manning's friendship as an earnest of its after gifts.

"I should have written before but for a troublesome inflammation in one of my eyes, brought on by night travelling with the coach windows sometimes up.

"What more I have to say shall be reserved for a letter to Lloyd. I must not prove tedious to you in my first outside, lest I should affright you by my ill-judged loquacity.

I am,

"Yours most sincerely,

"C. LAMB."

TO MR. MANNING.

"Dear Manning—Having suspended my correspondence a decent interval, as knowing that even good things may be taken to satiety, a wish cannot but recur to learn whether you be still well and happy. Do all things continue in the state I left them in Cambridge?

"Do your night parties still flourish? and do you continue to bewilder your company, with your thousand faces, running down through all the keys of idiotism (like Lloyd over his perpetual harpsichord), from the smile and the glimmer of half-

sense and quarter-sense, to the grin and hanging lip of Betty Foy's own Johnny? And does the face-dissolving curfew sound at twelve? How unlike the great originals were your petty terrors in the postscript, not fearful enough to make a fairy shudder, or a Lilliputian fine lady, eight months full of child, miscarry. Yet one of them, which had more beast than the rest, I thought faintly resembled *one* of your brutifications. But, seriously, I long to see your own honest Manning-face again. I did not mean a pun; your *man's* face, you will be apt to say, I know your wicked will to pun. I cannot now write to Lloyd and you too, so you must convey as much interesting intelligence as this may contain, or be thought to contain, to him and Sophia, with my dearest love and remembrances.

"By-the-by, I think you and Sophia both incorrect with regard to the *title* of the *play*.* Allowing your objection (which is not necessary, as pride may be, and is, in real life, often cured by misfortunes not directly originating from its own acts, as Jeremy Taylor will tell you, a naughty desire is sometimes sent to cure it. I know you read these *practical divines*), but allowing your objection, does not the betraying of his father's secret directly spring from pride? from the pride of wine and a full heart, and a proud overstepping of the ordinary rules of morality, and contempt of the prejudices of mankind, which are not to bind superior souls—'as *trust* in *the matter* of *secrets* all *ties* of *blood*, &c., &c., keeping of *promises*, the feeble mind's religion, binding our *morning knowledge* to the performance of what *last night's ignorance* spake'—does he not prate that '*Great Spirits*' must do more than die for their friend? does not the pride of wine incite him to display some evidence of friendship, which its own irregularity shall make great? This I know, that I meant his punishment not alone to be a cure for his daily and habitual *pride*, but the direct consequence and appropriate punishment of a particular act of pride.

"If you do not understand it so, it is my fault in not explaining my meaning.

"I have not seen Coleridge since, and scarcely expect to see him; perhaps he has been at Cambridge.

"Need I turn over, to blot a fresh, clean half-sheet? merely to say, what I hope you are sure of without my repeating it, that I would have you consider me, dear Manning,

"Your sincere friend,

"C. LAMB."

* It had been proposed to entitle John Woodvil "Pride's Cure."

Early in the following year (1800), Lamb, with his sister, removed to Chapel-street, Pentonville. In the summer he visited Coleridge at Stowey, and spent a few delightful holydays in his society and that of Wordsworth, who then resided in the neighbourhood. This was the first opportunity Lamb had enjoyed of seeing much of the poet who was destined to exercise a beneficial and lasting influence on the literature and moral sense of the opening century. At this time Lamb was scarcely prepared to sympathize with the naked simplicity of the "Lyrical Ballads" which Wordsworth was preparing for the press. The "rich conceits" of the writers of Elizabeth's reign had been blended with his first love of poetry, and he could not at once acknowledge the serene beauty of a style in which language was only the stainless mirror of thought, and which sought no aid either from the grandeur of artificial life or the pomp of words. In after days he was among the most earnest of this great poet's admirers, and rejoiced as he found the scoffers who sneered at his bold experiment gradually owning his power. How he felt when the little golden opportunity of conversation with Wordsworth and Coleridge had passed will appear from the following letter, which seems to have been addressed to Coleridge shortly after his return to London.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"I am scarcely yet so reconciled to the loss of you, or so subsided into my wonted uniformity of feeling, as to sit calmly down to think of you and write to you. But I reason myself into the belief that those few and pleasant holydays shall not have been spent in vain. I feel improvement in the recollection of many a casual conversation. The names of Tom Poole, of Wordsworth and his good sister, with thine and Sarah's, are become 'familiar in my mouth as household words.' You would make me very happy, if you think W. has no objection, by transcribing for me that inscription of his. I have some scattered sentences ever floating on my memory, teazing me that I cannot remember more of it. You may believe I will make no improper use of it. Believe me, I can think now of many subjects on which I had planned gaining information from you; but I forgot my 'treasure's worth' while I possessed it. Your leg is now become to me a matter of much more importance; and many a little thing, which, when I was present with you, seemed scarce to *indent* my notice, now presses painfully on my remembrance. Is the Patriot come yet? Are Wordsworth and his sister gone yet? I was looking out for John Thelwall all the way from Bridgewater, and, had

I met him, I think it would have moved me to tears. You will oblige me, too, by sending me my greatcoat, which I left behind in the oblivious state the mind is thrown into at parting; is it not ridiculous that I sometimes envy that greatcoat lingering so cunningly behind; at present I have none, so send it me by a Stowey wagon, if there be such a thing, directing for C. L., No. 45 Chapel-street, Pentonville, near London. But, above all, *that inscription!* it will recall to me the tones of all your voices, and with them many a remembered kindness to one who could and can repay you all only by the silence of a grateful heart. I could not talk much while I was with you, but my silence was not sullenness, nor, I hope, from any bad motive; but, in truth, disuse has made me awkward at it. I know I behaved myself, particularly at Tom Poole's and at Cruikshank's, most like a sulky child; but company and converse are strange to me. It was kind in you all to endure me as you did.

"Are you and your dear Sarah—to me also very dear, because very kind—agreed yet about the management of little Hartley, and how go on the little rogue's teeth? I will see White to-morrow, and he shall send you information on that matter; but, as perhaps I can do it as well after talking with him, I will keep this letter open.

"My love and thanks to you, and all of you.

"C. L.

"Wednesday evening."

Coleridge shortly after came to town, to make arrangements for his contributions to the daily press. The following note is addressed to him when in London.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Dear Coleridge—Now I write, I cannot miss this opportunity of acknowledging the obligations myself, and the readers in general of that luminous paper, the 'Morning Post,' are under to you for the very novel and exquisite manner in which you combined political with grammatical science in your yesterday's dissertation on Mr. Wyndham's unhappy composition. It must have been the death-blow to that ministry. I expect Pitt and Grenville to resign. More especially the delicate and Cottrellian grace with which you officiated, with a ferula for a white wand, as gentleman usher to the word 'also,' which, it seems, did not know its place.

"I expect Manning of Cambridge in town to-night; will you fulfil your promise of meeting him at my house? He is a man of a thousand. Give me a line to say what day, whether

Saturday, Sunday, Monday, &c., and if Sarah and the Philosopher can come. I am afraid, if I did not at intervals call upon you, I should *never see you*. But I forget the affairs of the nation engross your time and your mind.

"Farewell,

"C. L."

Coleridge afterward spent some weeks with Lamb, as appears from the following letter:—

TO MR. MANNING.

"Dear Manning—I am living in a continuous feast. Coleridge has been with me now for nigh three weeks, and the more I see of him in the quotidian undress and relaxation of his mind, the more cause I see to love him, and believe him a *very good man*, and all those foolish impressions to the contrary fly off like morning slumbers. He is engaged in translations, which, I hope, will keep him this month to come. He is uncommonly kind and friendly to me. He ferrets me day and night to *do something*. He tends me, amid all his own worrying and heart-oppressing occupations, as a gardener tends his young *tulip*. Marry come up! what a pretty similitude, and how like your humble servant! He has lugged me to the brink of engaging to a newspaper, and has suggested to me, for a first plan, the forgery of a supposed manuscript of Burton, the anatomist of melancholy. I have even written the introductory letter; and, if I can pick up a few guineas this way, I feel they will be most *refreshing*, bread being so dear. If I go on with it, I will apprize you of it, as you may like to see my things! and the *tulip*, of all flowers, loves to be admired most.

"Pray pardon me, if my letters do not come very thick. I am so taken up with one thing or other that I cannot pick out (I will not say time, but) fitting times to write to you. My dear love to Lloyd and Sophia, and pray split this thin letter into three parts, and present them with the *two biggest* in my name.

"They are my oldest friends; but, ever the new friend driveth out the old, as the ballad sings! God bless you all three! I would hear from Ll. if I could.

"C. L.

"Flour has just fallen nine shillings a sack! we shall be all too rich.

"Tell Charles I have seen his mamma, and have almost fallen in love with *her*, since I mayn't with Olivia. She is so fine and graceful, a complete matron-lady-Quaker. She has

given me two little books. Olivia grows a charming girl—full of feeling, and thinner than she was; but I have not time to fall in love.

"Mary presents her *general compliments*. She keeps in fine health!"

Coleridge, during this visit, recommended Lamb to Mr. Daniel Stuart, then editor of the "Morning Post," as a writer of light articles, by which he might add something to an income then barely sufficient for the decent support of himself and his sister. It would seem, from his next letter to Manning, that he had made an offer to try his hand at some personal squibs, which, ultimately, was not accepted. Manning need not have feared that there would have been a particle of malice in them! Lamb afterward became a correspondent to the paper, and has recorded his experience of the misery of toiling after pleasantries in one of the "Essays of Elia," entitled, "Newspapers thirty-five years ago."

TO MR. MANNING.

"C. L.'s moral sense presents her compliments to Doctor Manning, is very thankful for his medical advice, but is happy to add that her disorder has died of itself.

"Dr. Manning, Coleridge has left us to go into the north, on a visit to his god, Wordsworth. With him have flown all my splendid prospects of engagement with the 'Morning Post,' all my visionary guineas, the deceitful wages of unborn scandal. In truth, I wonder you took it up so seriously. All my intention was but to make a little sport with such public and fair game as Mr. Pitt, Mr Wilberforce, Mrs. F——, the devil, &c.—gentry dipped in Styx all over, whom no paper javelin-lings can touch. To have made free with these cattle, where was the harm? 'twould have been but giving a polish to lampblack, not nigrifying a negro primarily. After all, I cannot but regret my involuntary virtue. Hang virtue that's thrust upon us; it behaves itself with such constraint, till conscience opens the window and lets out the goose. I had struck off two imitations of Burton, quite abstracted from any modern allusions, which it was my intent only to engage in from time to time to make 'em popular.

"Stuart has got these, with an introductory letter; but, not hearing from him, I have ceased from my labours, but I write to him to-day to get a final answer. I am afraid they won't do for a paper. Burton is a scarce gentleman, not much known, else I had done 'em pretty well.

"I have also hit off a few lines in the name of Burton, being

a 'Conceit of Diabolic Possession.' Burton was a man often assailed by deepest melancholy, and at other times much given to laughing and jesting, as is the way with melancholy men. I will send them you: they were almost extempore, and no great things; but you will indulge them. Robert Lloyd is come to town. Priscilla meditates going to see Pizarro at Drury Lane to-night (from her uncle's), under cover of coming to dine with me . . *heu! tempora! heu! mores!* I have barely time to finish, as I expect her and Robin every minute.

"Yours as usual,

"C. L."

The following is an extract from a letter addressed about this time to Manning, who had taken a view of a personal matter relating to a common friend of both directly contrary to that of Lamb.

TO MR. MANNING.

"Rest you merry in your opinion! Opinion is a species of property; and though I am always desirous to share with my friend to a certain extent, I shall ever like to keep some tenets and some property properly my own. Some day, Manning, when we meet, substituting Croydon and fair Amaryllis for —— and ——, we will discuss together this question of moral feeling, 'In what cases, and how far sincerity is a virtue?' I do not mean Truth, a good Olivia-like creature, God bless her, who, meaning no offence, is always ready to give an answer when she is asked why she did so and so; but a certain forward-talking half-brother of hers, Sincerity, that amphibious gentleman, who is so ready to perk up his obnoxious sentiments unasked into your notice, as Midas would do his ears into your face uncalled for. But I despair of doing anything by a letter in the way of explaining or coming to explanations. A good wish, or a pun, or a piece of secret history, may be well enough that way conveyed; nay, it has been known that intelligence of a turkey hath been conveyed by that medium without much ambiguity. Godwin I am a good deal pleased with. He is a very well-behaved, pleasant man; nothing very brilliant about his conversation, or imposing, as you may suppose; quite another guess sort of gentleman from what your Anti-Jacobin Christians imagine him. I was well pleased to find he has neither horns nor claws; quite a tame creature, I assure you. A middle-sized man in stature; whereas, from his noisy fame, you would expect to find a Briareus Centimanus, or a Tityus tall enough to pull Jupiter from his heavens.

"Pray, is it a part of your sincerity to show my letters to

Lloyd? for, really, gentlemen ought to explain their vie upon a first acquaintance, to prevent mistakes.

"God bless you, Manning. Take my trifling *as trifl* and believe me, seriously and deeply,

"Your well-wisher and friend,

"C. L

The following letter was addressed to Coleridge sho after he had left London on a visit to Wordsworth, who, in mean time, had settled on the borders of Grasmere.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Dear Coleridge—I have taken to-day, and delivered L. & Co., imprimis, your books, viz., three ponderous Ger dictionaries, one volume (I can find no more) of German French ditto, sundry other German books unbound, as you them, 'Percy's Ancient Poetry,' and one volume of 'And son's Poets.' I specify them, that you may not lose any. *cundo*, a dressing-gown (value fivepence) in which you use sit and look like a conjurer when you were translating W lenstein. A case of two razors, and a shaving-box and stu This it has cost me a severe struggle to part with. They in a brown-paper parcel, which also contains sundry pap and poems, sermons, *some few Epic* Poems—one about C and Abel, which came from Poole, &c., &c., and also y tragedy, with one or two small German books, and that dra in which Got-fader performs Tertio; a small oblong box c taining *all your letters*, collected from all your waste pap and which fill the said little box. All other waste pap which I judged worth sending, are in the paper-parcel afo said. But you will find *all* your letters in the box by the selves. Thus have I discharged my conscience and my lu ber-room of all your property, save and except a folio entit 'Tyrrell's Bibliotheca Politica,' which you used to le your politics out of when you wrote for the 'Post,' *muta mutandis, i. e.*, applying past inferences to modern *data*. retain that, because I am sensible I am very deficient in politics myself; and I have torn up—don't be angry, waste per has risen forty per cent., and I can't afford to buy it— 'Bonaparte's Letters,' 'Arthur Young's Treatise on Corn,' one or two more light-armed infantry, which I thought bet suited the flippancy of London discussion than the dignity Keswick thinking. Mary says you will be in a passion ab them when you come to miss them; but you must study p losophy. Read 'Albertus Magnus de Chartis Amissis' f times over after phlebotomizing—'tis Burton's recipe—

then be angry with an absent friend if you can. Sara is obscure. Am I to understand by her letter that she sends a *kiss* to Eliza B——? Pray tell your wife that a note of interrogation on the superscription of a letter is highly ungrammatical —she proposes writing my name *Lamb?* Lambe is quite enough. I have had the Anthology, and like only one thing in it, *Lewti;* but of that the last stanza is detestable, the rest most exquisite! the epithet *enviable* would dash the finest poem. For God's sake (I never was more serious), don't make me ridiculous any more by terming me gentle-hearted in print, or do it in better verses. It did well enough five years ago when I came to see you, and was moral coxcomb enough at the time you wrote the lines to feed upon such epithets; but, besides that, the meaning of gentle is equivocal at best, and almost always means poor-spirited; the very quality of gentleness is abhorrent to such vile trumpetings. My *sentiment* is long since vanished. I hope my *virtues* have done *sucking.* I can scarce think but you meant it in joke. I hope you did, for I should be ashamed to think you could think to gratify me by such praise, fit only to be a cordial to some green-sick sonneteer.*

"I have hit off the following in imitation of old English poetry, which, I imagine, I am a dab at. The measure is unmeasurable; but it most resembles that beautiful ballad the Old and Young Courtier; and in its features of taking the extremes of two situations for just parallel, it resembles the old poetry certainly. If I could but stretch out the circumstances to twelve more verses, *i. e.*, if I had as much genius as the writer of that old song, I think it would be excellent. It was to follow an imitation of Burton in prose, which you have not seen. But fate 'and wisest Stewart' say No.†

"I can send you two hundred pens and six quires of paper *immediately,* if they will answer the carriage by coach. It would be foolish to pack 'em up *cum multis libris et cæteris*— they would all spoil. I only wait your commands to coach them. I would pay five-and-forty thousand carriages to read W.'s tragedy, of which I have heard so much and seen so lit-

* This refers to a poem of Coleridge's, composed in 1797, and published in the Anthology of the year 1800, under the title of "This Lime-tree Bower my Prison," addressed to "Charles Lamb, of the India House, London," in which Lamb is thus apostrophized, as taking more pleasure in the country than Coleridge's other visiters—a compliment which even then he scarcely merited:—

"But thou, methinks most glad,
My gentle-hearted Charles! For thou hast pined
And linger'd after nature many a year,
In the great city pent."

† The quaint and pathetic poem, entitled "A Ballad, noticing the difference of rich and poor, in the ways of a rich noble's palace and a poor workhouse."

tle—only what I saw at Stowey. Pray give me an order in writing on Longman for 'Lyrical Ballads.' I have the first volume, and, truth to tell, six shillings is a broad shot. I cram all I can in to save a multiplying of letters—those pretty comets with swinging tails.

"I'll just crowd in God bless you!

Wednesday night, 6th Aug., 1800."

"John Woodvil" was now printed, although not published till a year afterward; probably withheld in the hope of its representation on the stage. A copy was sent to Coleridge for Wordsworth, with the following letter, or cluster of letters, written at several times. The ladies referred to in the exquisite description of Coleridge's blue-stocking friends are beyond the reach of feeling its application; nor will it be detected by the most apprehensive of their surviving friends.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"I send you, in this parcel, my play, which I beg you to present, in my name, with my respect and love, to Wordsworth and his sister. You blame us for giving your direction to Miss W——; the woman has been ten times after us about it, and we gave it her at last, under the idea that no further harm would ensue; but she would *once* write to you, and you would bite your lips, and forget to answer it, and so it would end. You read us a dismal homily upon 'Realities.' We know, quite as well as you do, what are shadows and what are realities. You, for instance, when you are over your fourth or fifth jorum, chirping about old school occurrences, are the best of realities. Shadows are cold, thin things, that have no warmth or grasp in them. Miss W——, and her friend, and a tribe of authoresses that come after you here daily, and, in defect of you, hive and cluster upon us, are the shadows. You encouraged that mopsey, Miss W——, to dance after you, in the hope of having her nonsense put into a nonsensical Anthology. We have pretty well shaken her off by that simple expedient of referring her to you; but there are more burs in the wind. I came home t'other day from business, hungry as a hunter, to dinner, with nothing, I am sure, of *the author but hunger* about me, and whom found I closeted with Mary but a friend of this Miss W——, one Miss B——e, or B——y, I don't know how she spells her name. I just came in time enough, I believe, luckily, to prevent them from exchanging vows of eternal friendship. It seems she is one of your authoresses, that you first foster, and then upbraid us with. But I forgive you. 'The rogue has given me potions to make me

love him.' Well; go she would not, nor step a step over our threshold, till we had promised to come and drink tea with her next night. I had not seen her before, and could not tell who it was that was so familiar. We went, however, not to be impolite. Her lodgings are up two flights of stairs in —— street. Tea and coffee, and macaroons—a kind of cake which I much love. We sat down. Presently Miss B—— broke the silence by declaring herself quite of a different opinion from *D'Israeli*, who supposes the differences of human intellect to be the mere effect of organization. She begged to know my opinion. I attempted to carry it off with a pun upon organ, but that went off very flat. She immediately conceived a very low opinion of my metaphysics; and, turning round to Mary, put some question to her in French—possibly having heard that neither Mary nor I understood French. The explanation that took place occasioned some embarrassment and much wondering. She then fell into an insulting conversation about the comparative genius and merits of all modern languages, and concluded with asserting that the Saxon was esteemed the purest dialect in Germany. From thence she passed into the subject of poetry; where I, who had hitherto sat mute, and a hearer only, humbly hoped I might now put in a word to some advantage, seeing that it was my own trade in a manner. But I was stopped by a round assertion that no good poetry had appeared since Dr. Johnson's time. It seems the doctor had suppressed many hopeful geniuses that way, by the severity of his critical strictures in his 'Lives of the Poets.' I here ventured to question the fact, and was beginning to appeal to *names*, but I was assured 'it was certainly the case.' Then we discussed Miss More's book on education, which I had never read. It seems Dr. Gregory, another of Miss B——'s friends, has found fault with one of Miss More's metaphors. Miss More has been at some pains to vindicate herself; in the opinion of Miss B——, not without success. It seems the doctor is invariably against the use of broken or mixed metaphor, which he reprobates, against the authority of Shakspeare himself. We next discussed the question whether Pope was a poet. I find Dr. Gregory is of opinion he was not, though Miss Seward does not at all concur with him in this. We then sat upon the comparative merits of the ten translations of 'Pizarro,' and Miss B—— advised Mary to take two of them home; she thought it might afford her some pleasure to compare them *verbatim:* which we declined. It being now nine o'clock, wine and macaroons were again served round, and we parted, with a promise to go again next week, and meet the Misses Porter, who, it seems, have heard

much of Mr. Coleridge, and wish to meet *us*, because we are *his* friends. I have been preparing for the occasion. I crowd cotton in my ears. I read all the reviews and magazines of the past month against the dreadful meeting, and I hope by these means to cut a tolerable second-rate figure.

"Pray let us have no more complaints about shadows. We are in a fair way, *through you*, to surfeit sick upon them.

"Our loves and respects to your host and hostess.

'Take no thought about your proof-sheets; they shall be done as if Woodfall himself did them. Pray send us word of Mrs. Coleridge and little David Hartley, your little reality.

"Farewell, dear Substance. Take no umbrage at anything I have written.

"C. LAMB.

"*Umbra.*

"Land of Shadows,
Shadow-month the 16th or 17th, 1800."

"Coleridge, I find loose among your papers a copy of Christabel. It wants about thirty lines; you will very much oblige me by sending the beginning as far as that line—

'And the spring comes slowly up this way;'

and the intermediate lines between—

'The lady leaps up suddenly,
The lovely Lady Christabel;'

and the lines—

'She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.'

The trouble to you *will be small*, and the benefit to us *very great!* A pretty antithesis! A figure in speech I much applaud.

"Godwin has called upon us. He spent one evening here. Was very friendly. Kept us up till midnight. Drank punch, and talked about you. He seems, above all men, mortified at your going away. Suppose you were to write to that good-natured heathen;

'Or is he a *shadow?*'

"If I do not *write*, impute it to the long postage, of which you have so much cause to complain. I have scribbled over a *queer letter*, as I find by perusal, but it means no mischief.

"I am, and will be, yours ever, in sober sadness,

"C. L.

"Write your *German* as plain as sunshine, for that must correct itself You know I am homo unius linguæ; in English, illiterate, a dunce, a ninny."

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"How do you like this little epigram? It is not my writing, nor had I any finger in it. If you concur with me in thinking it very elegant and very original, I shall be tempted to name the author to you. I will just hint that it is almost or quite a first attempt.

[Here Miss Lamb's little poem of Helen was introduced.]

"By-the-by, I have a sort of recollection that somebody, I think *you*, promised me a sight of Wordsworth's tragedy. I should be very glad of it just now; for I have got Manning with me, and should like to read it *with him*. But this, I confess, is a refinement. Under any circumstances, alone, in Cold-Bath prison, or in the desert island, just when Prospero and his crew had set off, with Caliban in a cage, to Milan, it would be a treat to me to read that play. Manning has read it, so has Lloyd, and all Lloyd's family; but I could not get him to betray his trust by giving *me* a sight of it. Lloyd is sadly deficient in some of those virtuous vices.

* * * * * *

"George Dyer is the only literary character I am happily acquainted with. The oftener I see him the more deeply I admire him. He is goodness itself. If I could but calculate the precise date of his death, I would write a novel on purpose to make George the hero. I could hit him off to a hair."

The tragedy which Lamb was thus anxious to read has been perseveringly withheld from the world. A fine passage, quoted in one of Wordsworth's prose essays, make us share in his earnest curiosity.

> "Action is momentary—
> A word, a blow—the motion of a muscle this way or that;
> Suffering is long, drear, and infinite."

Wordsworth's genius is perhaps more fitly employed in thus tracing out the springs of heroic passion, and developing the profound elements of human character, than in following them out through their exhibition in violent contest or majestic repose. Surely he may *now* afford to gratify the world!

The next is a short but characteristic letter to Manning.

TO MR. MANNING.

"My dear fellow (N. B. mighty familiar of late!), for me to come to Cambridge now is one of Heaven's impossibilities. Metaphysicians tell us, even it can work nothing which implies a contradiction. I can explain this by telling you that I

am engaged to do double duty (this hot weather!) for a man who has taken advantage of this very weather to go and cool himself in 'green retreats' all the month of August.

"But for you to come to London instead! muse upon it, revolve it, cast it about in your mind. I have a bed at your command. You shall drink rum, brandy, gin, aquavitæ, usquebaugh, or whiskey a' nights; and for the after dinner-trick I have eight bottles of genuine port, which, mathematically divided, gives one and one seventh for every day you stay, provided you stay a week. Hear John Milton sing,

'Let Euclid rest and Archimedes pause.'
Twenty-first Sonnet.

And elsewhere,

'What neat repast shall feast us, light* and choice,
Of Attic taste, with wine,† whence we may rise,
To hear the lute well touch'd, or artful voice
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?'

"Indeed, the poets are full of this pleasing mortality—

'Veni cite, Domine Manning!'

"Think upon it. Excuse the paper, it is all I have.

"C. LAMB."

Lamb now meditated a removal to the home-place of his best and most solemn thoughts—the Temple; and thus announced it in a letter to Manning.

TO MR. MANNING.

"You masters of logic ought to know (logic is nothing more than a knowledge of *words*, as the Greek etymon implies) that all words are no more to be taken in a literal sense at all times than a promise given to a tailor. When I expressed an apprehension that you were mortally offended, I meant no more than by the application of a certain formula of efficacious sounds, which had *done* in similar cases before, to rouse a sense of decency in you, and a remembrance of what was due to me! You masters of logic should advert to this phenomenon in human speech before you arraign the usage of us dramatic geniuses. Imagination is a good blood-mare, and goes well; but the misfortune is, she has too many paths before her. 'Tis true, I might have imaged to myself that you had trundled your frail carcass to Norfolk. I might also and did imagine that you had not, but that you were lazy, or inventing new properties in a triangle, and for that purpose

* "We poets! generally give *light* dinners."
† "No doubt the poet here alludes to port-wine at 38*s.* the dozen."

moulding and squeezing Landlord Crisp's three-cornered beaver into fantastic experimental forms; or, that Archimedes was meditating to repulse the French, in case of a Cambridge invasion, by a geometric hurling of folios on their red caps; or, peradventure, that you were in extremities, in great wants, and just set out for Trinity-boys when my letters came. In short, my genius! (which is a short word nowadays for what-a-great-man-am-I!) was absolutely stifled and overlaid with its own riches. Truth is one and poor, like the cruise of Elijah's widow. Imagination is the bold face that multiplies its oil; and thou, the old cracked pipkin, that could not believe it could be put to such purposes. Dull pipkin, to have Elijah for thy cook. Imbecile recipient of so fat a miracle. I send you George Dyer's Poems, the richest production of the lyrical muse *this century* can boast; for Wordsworth's L. B. were published, or at least written, before Christmas.

"Please to advert to pages 291 to 276 for the most astonishing account of where Shakspeare's muse has been all this while. I thought she had been dead, and buried in Stratford Church, with the young man *that kept her company*—

> 'But it seems, like the devil,
> Buried in Cole Harbour,
> Some say she's risen again,
> Gone 'prentice to a barber.'

"N.B.—I don't charge anything for the additional manuscript notes, which are the joint productions of myself and a learned translator of Schiller, —— Stoddart, Esq.

"N.B. the 2d.—I should not have blotted your book, but I had sent my own out to be bound, as I was in duty bound. A liberal criticism upon the several pieces, lyrical, heroical, amatory, and satirical, would be acceptable. So some think there's not a Words—worth of good poetry in the great L. B.! I daren't put the dreaded syllables at their just length, for my *back* tingles from the northern castigation.

"I am going to change my lodgings, having received a hint that it would be agreeable, at our Lady's next feast. I have partly fixed upon most delectable rooms, which look out (when you stand a tiptoe) over the Thames and Surrey Hills, at the upper end of King's Bench walks, in the Temple. There I shall have all the privacy of a house without the encumbrance, and shall be able to lock my friends out as often as I desire to hold free converse with my immortal mind, for my present lodgings resemble a minister's levee, I have so increased my acquaintance (as they call 'em) since I resided in town. Like the town mouse, that had tasted a little of urbane manners, I long to be nibbling my own cheese by my dear

self, without mousetraps and timetraps. By my new plan I shall be as airy, up four pair of stairs, as in the country; and in a garden, in the midst of enchanting, more than Mohammedan paradise, London, whose dirtiest drab-frequented alley, and her lowest bowing tradesman, I would not exchange for Skiddaw, Helvellyn, James, Walter, and the parson into the bargain. Oh! her lamps of a night! her rich goldsmiths, printshops, toyshops, mercers, hardwaremen, pastrycooks! St. Paul's churchyard, the Strand! Exeter Change! Charing Cross, with the man *upon* a black horse! These are thy gods, oh London! An't you mightily moped on the banks of the Cam? Had you not better come and set up here? You can't think what a difference. All the streets and pavements are pure gold, I warrant you. At least, I know an alchymy that turns her mud into that metal—a mind that loves to be at home in crowds.

"'Tis half past twelve o'clock, and all sober people ought to be abed.

"C. LAMB (as you may guess)."

The following letters appear to have been written during Coleridge's visit to Wordsworth.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"By some fatality, unusual with me, I have mislaid the list of books which you want. Can you, from memory, easily supply me with another?

"I confess to Statius, and I detained him wilfully, out of a reverend regard to your style. Statius, they tell me, is turgid. As to that other Latin book, since you know neither its name nor subject, your wants (I crave leave to apprehend) cannot be very urgent. Meanwhile, dream that it is one of the lost Decades of Livy.

"Your particularity to me has led you to form an erroneous opinion as to the measure of delight you suppose me to take in obliging. Pray be careful that it spread no farther. 'Tis one of those heresies that is very pregnant. Pray rest more satisfied with the portion of learning which you have got, and disturb my peaceful ignorance as little as possible with such sort of commissions.

"Did you never observe an appearance well known by the name of the man in the moon? Some scandalous old maids have set on foot a report that it is Endymion.

"Your theory about the first awkward step a man makes being the consequence of learning to dance, is not universal. We have known many youths bred up in Christ's who never learned to dance, yet the world imputes to them no

very graceful motions. I remember there was little Hudson, the immortal precentor of St. Paul's, to teach us our quavers; but, to the best of my recollection, there was no master of motions when we were at Christ's.

"Farewell, in haste. "C. L."

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Dear Wordsworth—I have not forgot your commissions. But the truth is—and why should I not confess it?—I am not plethorically abounding in cash at this present. Merit, Heaven knows, is very little rewarded; but it does not become me to speak of myself. My motto is, 'contented with little, yet wishing for more.' Now the books you wish for would require some pounds, which, I am sorry to say, I have not by me; so I will say at once, if you will give me a draught upon your town banker for any sum you propose to lay out, I will dispose of it to the very best of my skill in choice old books, such as my own soul loveth. In fact, I have been waiting for the liquidation of a debt to enable myself to set about your commission handsomely; for it is a scurvy thing to cry, 'Give me the money first,' and I am the first of the family of the Lambs that have done it for many centuries; but the debt remains as it was, and my old friend that I accommodated has generously forgot it! The books which you want I calculate at about £8. Ben Jonson is a guinea book. Beaumont and Fletcher, in folio, the right folio not now to be met with; the octavoes are about £3. As to any other dramatists, I do not know where to find them, except what are in Dodsley's old plays, which are about £3 also. Massinger I never saw but at one shop, but it is now gone; but one of the editions of Dodsley contains about a fourth (the best) of his plays. Congreve, and the rest of King Charles's moralists, are cheap and accessible. The works on Ireland I will inquire after, but I fear Spenser's is not to be had apart from his poems; I never saw it. But you may depend upon my sparing no pains to furnish you as complete a library of old poets and dramatists as will be prudent to buy; for I suppose you do include the £20 edition of Hamlet, single play, which Kemble has. Marlow's plays and poems are totally vanished; only one edition of Dodsley retains one, and the other two of his plays; but John Ford is the man after Shakspeare. Let me know your will and pleasure soon, for I have observed, next to the pleasure of buying a bargain for one's self is the pleasure of persuading a friend to buy it. It tickles one with the image of an imprudency, without the penalty usually annexed.

"C. Lamb."

CHAPTER VI.

[1800.]

Letters to Manning, after Lamb's removal to the Temple.

In the year 1800, Lamb carried into effect his purpose of removing to Mitre-court Buildings, Temple. During this time he wrote only a few small poems, which he transmitted to Manning. In his letters to Manning a vein of wild humour breaks out, of which there are but slight indications in the correspondence with his more sentimental friends; as if the very opposition of Manning's more scientific power to his own force of sympathy provoked the sallies which the genial kindness of the mathematician fostered. The prodigal and reckless humour of some of these letters forms a striking contrast to the deep feeling of the earlier letters to Coleridge. His 'Essays of Elia' show the harmonious union of both. The following letter contains Lamb's description of his new abode.

TO MR. MANNING.

"I was not aware that you owed me anything besides that guinea; but I dare say you are right. I live at No. 16 Mitre-court Buildings, a pistol-shot off Baron Maseres.' You must introduce me to the baron. I think we should suit one another mainly. He lives on the ground floor, for convenience of the gout; I prefer the attic story, for the air! He keeps three footmen and two maids; I have neither maid nor laundress, not caring to be troubled with them! His forte, I understand, is the higher mathematics; my turn, I confess, is more to poetry and the belles lettres. The very antithesis of our characters would make up a harmony. You must bring the baron and me together. N.B. when you come to see me, mount up to the top of the stairs—I hope you are not asthmatical—and come in flannel, for it's pure airy up there. And bring your glass, and I will show you the Surrey Hills. My bed faces the river, so as by perking up upon my haunches, and supporting my carcass with my elbows, without much wrying my neck, I can see the white sails glide by the bottom of the King's Bench walks as I lie in my bed. An excellent tiptoe prospect in the best room; casement windows, with small panes, to look more like a cottage. Mind, I have got no

bed for you, that's flat; sold it to pay expenses of moving. The very bed on which Manning lay; the friendly, the mathematical Manning! How forcibly does it remind me of the interesting Otway! 'The very bed which on thy marriage night gave thee into the arms of Belvidera, by the coarse hand of ruffians' (upholsterers' men), &c. My tears will not give me leave to go on. But a bed I will get you, Manning, on condition you will be my day guest.

"I have been ill more than a month with a bad cold, which comes upon me (like a murderer's conscience) about midnight, and vexes me for many hours. I have successively been drugged with Spanish licorice, opium, ipecacuanha, paregoric, and tincture of foxglove (tinctura purpuræ digitalis of the ancients). I am afraid I must leave off drinking."

* * * * * *

Lamb then gives an account of his visit to an exhibition of snakes—of a frightful vividness and interesting—as all details of these fascinating reptiles are, which we at once loathe and long to look upon, as the old enemies and tempters of our race.

TO MR. MANNING.

"Dear Manning—Had you written one week before you did, I certainly should have obeyed your injunction; you should have seen me before my letter. I will explain to you my situation. There are six of us in one department. Two of us (within these four days) are confined with severe fevers; and two more, who belong to the Tower Militia, expect to have marching orders on Friday. Now six are absolutely necessary. I have already asked and obtained two young hands to supply the loss of the *feverites;* and, with the other prospect before me, you may believe I cannot decently ask leave of absence for myself. All I can promise (and I do promise, with the sincerity of Saint Peter, and the contrition of sinner Peter if I fail) that I will come *the very first spare week*, and go nowhere till I have been at Cambridge. No matter if you are in a state of pupilage when I come; for I can employ myself in Cambridge very pleasantly in the mornings. Are there not libraries, halls, colleges, books, pictures, statues? I wish you had made London in your way. There is an exhibition quite uncommon in Europe, which could not have escaped *your genius*—a live rattlesnake, ten feet in length, and the thickness of a big leg. I went to see it last night by candlelight. We were ushered into a room very little bigger than ours at Pentonville. A man and woman and four boys live in this room, joint tenants with nine snakes, most of them such

as no remedy has been discovered for their bite. We walked into the middle, which is formed by a half-moon of wired boxes, all mansions of *snakes*—whip-snakes, thunder-snakes, pie-nose-snakes, American vipers, and *this monster*. He lies curled up in folds; and, immediately a stranger enters (for he is used to the family, and sees them play at cards), he sets up a rattle like a watchman's in London, or near as loud, and reared up a head, from the midst of these folds, like a toad, and shook his head, and showed every sign a snake can show of irritation. I had the foolish curiosity to strike the wires with my finger, and the devil flew at me with his toad-mouth wide open: the inside of his mouth is quite white. I had got my finger away, nor could he well have bit me with his big mouth, which would have been certain death in five minutes. But it frightened me so much that I did not recover my voice for a minute's space. I forgot, in my fear, that he was secured. You would have forgot too, for 'tis incredible how such a monster can be confined in small gauzy-looking wires. I dreamed of snakes in the night. I wish to Heaven you could see it. He absolutely swelled with passion to the bigness of a large thigh. I could not retreat without infringing on another box, and just behind, a little devil, not an inch from my back, had got his nose out, with some difficulty and pain, quite through the bars! He was soon taught better manners. All the snakes were curious, and objects of terror; but this monster, like Aaron's serpent, swallowed up the impression of the rest. He opened his cursed mouth when he made at me as wide as his head was broad. I hallooed out quite loud, and felt pains all over my body with the fright.

"I have had the felicity of hearing George Dyer read out one book of 'The Farmer's Boy.' I thought it rather childish. No doubt there is originality in it (which, in your self-taught geniuses, is a most rare quality, they generally getting hold of some bad models, in a scarcity of books, and forming their taste on them), but no *selection*. *All* is described.

"Mind, I have only heard read one book.

"Yours sincerely,

"Philo-Snake,

"C. L."

The following are fragments from a letter chiefly on personal matters, the interest of which is gone by:—

TO MR. MANNING.

"And now, when shall I catch a glimpse of your honest face-to-face countenance again? Your fine *dogmatical*, *skepti-*

cal face by punch-light? Oh! one glimpse of the human face, and shake of the human hand, is better than whole reams of this cold, thin correspondence; yea, of more worth than all the letters that have sweated the fingers of sensibility from Madame Sévigné to Sterne and Shenstone.

"Coleridge is settled with his wife and the young philosopher at Keswick, with the Wordsworths. They have contrived to spawn a new volume of lyrical ballads, which is to see the light in about a month, and causes no little excitement in the *literary world*. George Dyer, too, that good-natured poet, is more than nine months gone with his twin volumes of ode, pastoral, sonnet, elegy, Spenserian, Horatian, Akensidish, and Masonic verse; Clio prosper the birth! it will be twelve shillings out of somebody's pocket. Well, God put it into the hearts of the English gentry to come in shoals and subscribe to his poems, for he never put a kinder heart into flesh of man than George Dyer's!

"Now farewell, for dinner is at hand.

"C. L."

Lamb had engaged to spend a few days, when he could obtain leave, with Manning at Cambridge, and, just as he hoped to accomplish his wish, received an invitation from Lloyd to give his holyday to the poets assembled at the Lakes. In the joyous excitement of spirits which the anticipated visit to Manning produced, he thus plays off Lloyd's proposal on his friend, abuses mountains, and luxuriates in his love of London:—

TO MR. MANNING.

"Dear Manning—I have received a very kind invitation from Lloyd and Sophia to go and spend a month with them at the lakes. Now it fortunately happens (which is so seldom the case!) that I have spare cash by me, enough to answer the expenses of so long a journey; and I am determined to get away from the office by some means. The purpose of this letter is to request of you (my dear friend), that you will not take it unkind if I decline my proposed visit to Cambridge *for the present*. Perhaps I shall be able to take Cambridge *in my way*, going or coming. I need not describe to you the expectations which such a one as myself, pent up all my life in a dirty city, have formed of a tour to the lakes. Consider, Grassmere! Ambleside! Wordsworth! Coleridge! Hills, woods, lakes, and mountains, to the eternal devil. I will eat snipes with thee, Thomas Manning. Only confess, confess a *bite*.

"P S. I think you named the 16th; but was it not mod-

est of Lloyd to send such an invitation! It shows his knowledge of *money* and *time*. I would be loath to think he meant

'Ironic satire sidelong sklented on my poor pursie.'
BURNS.

For my part, with reference to my friends northward, I am not romance-bit about *Nature*. The earth, and sea, and sky (when all is said) is but as a house to dwell in. If the inmates be courteous, and good liquors flow like the conduits at an old coronation, if they can talk sensibly and feel properly, I have no need to stand staring upon the gilded looking-glass (that strained my friend's purse-strings in the purchase), nor his five-shilling print over the mantelpiece of old Nabbs the carrier (which only betrays his false taste). Just as important to me (in a sense) is all the furniture of my world; eye-pampering, but satisfies no heart. Streets, streets, streets, markets, theatres, churches, Covent Gardens, shops sparkling with pretty faces of industrious milliners, neat seamstresses, ladies cheapening, gentlemen behind counters lying, authors in the streets with spectacles (you may know them by their gait), lamps lighted at night, pastrycook and silversmith shops, beautiful Quakers of Pentonville, noise of coaches, drowsy cry of mechanic watchmen at night, with bucks reeling home drunk; if you happen to wake at midnight, cries of fire; and stop thief; inns of court, with their learned air, and halls, and butteries, just like Cambridge colleges; old bookstalls, 'Jeremy Taylors,' 'Burtons on Melancholy,' and 'Religio Medicis' on every stall. These are thy pleasures, oh London! with-the-many-sins. Oh city, abounding in ——, for these may Keswick and her giant brood go hang!

"C. L."

On this occasion Lamb was disappointed; but he was consoled by the acquisition of a new friend in Mr. Rickman, of the House of Commons, and exults in a strain which he never had reason to regret. This piece of rare felicity enabled him even to bear the loss of his manuscripts and the delay of his hopes; which, according to the old theatrical usage, he was destined to endure.

TO MR. MANNING.

"*Enquid meditatur Archimedes?* What is Euclid doing? What hath happened to learned Trismegist? Doth he take it in ill part that his humble friend did not comply with his courteous invitation? Let it suffice, I could not come; are impossibilities nothing? be they abstractions of the intellect? or not (rather) most sharp and mortifying realities? nuts in

the Will's mouth too hard for her to crack? brick and stone walls in her way, which she can by no means eat through? sore lets, *impedimenta viarum*, no thoroughfares? *racemi nimium alte pendentes?* Is the phrase classic? I allude to the grapes in Æsop, which cost the fox a strain, and gained the world an aphorism. Observe the superscription of this letter. In adapting the size of the letters which constitute *your* name and Mr. *Crisp's* name respectively, I had an eye to your different stations in life. 'Tis truly curious, and must be soothing to an *aristocrat*. I wonder it has never been hit on before my time. I have made an acquisition lately of a *pleasant hand*, one Rickman, to whom I was introduced by ——, not the most flattering auspices under which one man can be introduced to another; George brings all sorts of people together, setting up a sort of agrarian law or common property in matter of society; but, for once, he has done me a great pleasure, while he was only pursuing a principle, as *ignes fatui may* light you home. This Rickman lives in our buildings, immediately opposite our house; the finest fellow to drop in a' nights, about nine or ten o'clock—cold bread and cheese time—just in the *wishing* time of the night, when you *wish* for somebody to come in, without a distinct idea of a probable anybody. Just in the nick, neither too early to be tedious nor too late to sit a reasonable time. He is a most pleasant hand; a fine, rattling fellow; has gone through life laughing at solemn apes; himself hugely literate, oppressively full of information in all stuff of conversation, from matter of fact to Xenophon and Plato; can talk Greek with Porson, politics with Thelwall, conjecture with George Dyer, nonsense with me, and anything with anybody; a great farmer, somewhat concerned in an agricultural magazine; reads no poetry but Shakspeare, very intimate with Southey; loves George Dyer; thoroughly penetrates into the ridiculous, wherever found; understands the *first time* (a great desideratum in common minds), you need never twice speak to him; does not want explanations, translations, limitations, as Professor Godwin does when you make an assertion; *up* to anything; *down* to everything; whatever *sapit hominem*. A perfect *man*. All this farrago, which must perplex you to read, and has put me to a little trouble to *select!* only proves how impossible it is to describe a *pleasant hand*. You must see Rickman to know him, for he is a species in one. A new class. An exotic, any slip of which I am proud to put in my garden-pot. The clearest-headed fellow. Fullest of matter, with least verbosity. If there be any alloy in my fortune to have met with such a man, it is that he commonly divides his time between town

and country, having some foolish family ties at Christchurch, by which means he can only gladden our London hemisphere with returns of light. He is now going for six weeks.

"At last I have written to Kemble, to know the event of my play, which was presented last Christmas. As I suspected, came an answer back that the copy was lost, and could not be found; no hint that anybody had to this day ever looked into it; with a courteous (reasonable!) request of another copy (if I had one by me), and a promise of a definitive answer in a week. I could not resist so facile and moderate a demand, so scribbled out another, omitting sundry things, such as the witch story, about half of the forest scene (which is leisurely for story), and transposing that soliloquy about England getting drunk, which, like its reciter, stupidly stood alone, nothing prevenient or antevenient, and cleared away a good deal besides, and sent this copy, written *all out* (with alterations, &c., *requiring judgment*) in one day and a half! I sent it last night, and am in weekly expectation of the tolling bell and death-warrant.

"This is all my London news. Send me some from the *banks* of *Cam*, as the poets delight to speak, especially ——, who has no other name, nor idea, nor definition of Cambridge; namely, its being a market town, sending members to parliament, never entered into his definition; it was and is, simply, the banks of the Cam, or the fair Cam; as Oxford is the banks of the Isis, or the fair Isis. Yours in all humility, most illustrious Trismegist,

"C. LAMB.

("Read on, there's more at the bottom.)

"You ask me about the 'Farmer's Boy'—don't you think the fellow who wrote it (who is a shoemaker) has a poor mind? Don't you find he is always silly about *poor Giles* and those abject kind of phrases, which mark a man that look up to wealth? None of Burns's poet dignity. What do you think? I have just opened him, but he makes me sick."

Here is a short but characteristic instance of the humour of the time.

TO MR. MANNING.

"Dear Archimedes—Things have gone on badly with thy ungeometrical friend; but they are on the turn. My old housekeeper has showed signs of convalescence, and will shortly resume the power of the keys, so I shan't be cheated of my tea and liquors. Wind in the west, which promotes tranquillity.

Have leisure now to anticipate seeing thee again. Have been taking leave of tobacco in a rhyming address. Had thought *that vein* had long since closed up. Find I can rhyme and reason too. Think of studying mathematics, to restrain the fire of my genius, which G. D. recommends. Have frequent bleedings at the nose, which shows plethoric. Maybe shall try the sea myself, that great scene of wonders. Got incredibly sober and regular: shave oftener, and hum a tune, to signify cheerfulness and gallantry.

"Suddenly disposed to sleep, having taken a quart of peas with bacon, and stout. Will not refuse Nature, who has done such things for me!

"Nurse! don't call me unless Mr. Manning comes. What! the gentleman in spectacles? Yes.

"*Dormit.*

"C. L.

"Saturday,
"Hot Noon."

Constant to the fame of Jem White, Lamb did not fail to enlist Manning among the admirers of the "Falstaff's Letter." The next letter referring to them is, however, more interesting for the light which it casts on Lamb's indifference to the politics of the time and fond devotion to the past.

TO MR. MANNING.

"I hope by this time you are prepared to say the 'Falstaff's Letters' are a bundle of the sharpest, queerest, profoundest humours, of any these juice-drained latter times have spawned. I should have advertised you that the meaning is frequently hard to be got at; and so are the future guineas that now lie ripening and aurifying in the womb of some undiscovered Potosi; but dig, dig, dig, dig, Manning! I set to, with an unconquerable propulsion to write, with a lamentable want of what to write. My private goings on are orderly as the movements of the spheres, and stale as their music to angels' ears. Public affairs—except as they touch upon me, and so turn into private—I cannot whip up my mind to feel any interest in. I grieve, indeed, that War, and Nature, and Mr. Pitt, that hangs up in Lloyd's best parlour, should have conspired to call up three necessaries, simple commoners as our fathers knew them, into the upper house of luxuries; bread, and beer, and coals, Manning. But as to France and Frenchmen, and the Abbé Siéyes and his constitutions, I cannot make these present times present to me. I read histories of the past, and I live in them; although, to abstract senses, they are far less momentous than

the noises which keep Europe awake. I am reading 'Burnet's own Times.' Did you ever read that garrulous, pleasant history? He tells his story like an old man past political service, bragging to his sons on winter evenings of the part he took in public transactions when 'his old cap was new.' Full of scandal, which all true history is. No palliatives, but all the stark wickedness that actually gives the *momentum* to national actors. Quite the prattle of age and outlived importance. Truth and sincerity staring out upon you perpetually in *alto relievo*. Himself a party-man, he makes you a party-man. None of the cursed philosophical Humeian indifference, so cold, and unnatural, and inhuman! None of the cursed Gibbonian fine writing, so fine and composite. None of Dr. Robertson's periods with three members. None of Mr. Roscoe's sage remarks, all so apposite, and coming in so clever, lest the reader should have had the trouble of drawing an inference. Burnet's good old prattle I can bring present to my mind; I can make the revolution present to me—the French revolution, by a converse perversity in my nature, I fling as far *from* me. To leave this tiresome subject, and to relieve you from two or three dismal yawns, which I hear in spirit, I here conclude my more than commonly obtuse letter; dull, up to the dulness of a Dutch commentator on Shakspeare.

"My love to Loyd and to Sophia.

"C. L."

While Lamb's dramatic destinies were in suspense, he was called on "to assist" at the production of a tragedy, by a friend, whose more mature reputation gave him readier access to the manager, but who had no better claim to success than himself. Mr. Godwin, whose powerful romance of Caleb Williams had supplied the materials for "The Iron Chest" of Colman, naturally aspired, on his own account, to the glory of the scene, and completed a tragedy under the title of "Antonio, or the Soldier's Return," which was accepted at Drury Lane Theatre, and announced for representation on Saturday, the 13th December, in this year. Lamb supplied the epilogue, which he copied in the following letter addressed to Manning on the eventful day:—

TO MR. MANNING.

"I have received your letter *this moment*, not having been at the office. I have just time to scribble down the epilogue. To your last epistle I will just reply, that I will certainly come to Cambridge before January is out: I'll come *when I can*. You shall have an emended copy of my play early next week.

Mary thanks you; but her handwriting is too feminine to be exposed to a Cambridge gentleman, though I endeavour to persuade her that you understand algebra, and must understand her hand. The play is the man's you wot of; but, for Heaven's sake, do not mention it; it is to come out in a feigned name, as one Tobin's. I will omit the introductory lines which connect it with the play, and give you the concluding tale, which is the mass and bulk of the epilogue. The *name* is *Jack* INCIDENT. It is about promise-breaking; you will see it all if you read the *papers*.

Jack, of dramatic genius justly vain,
Purchased a renter's share at Drury Lane;
A prudent man in every other matter,
Known at his club-room for an honest hatter;
Humane and courteous, led a civil life,
And has been seldom known to beat his wife;
But Jack is now grown quite another man,
Frequents the green-room, knows the plot and plan
Of each new piece,
And has been seen to talk with Sheridan!
In at the playhouse just at six he pops,
And never leaves it till the curtain drops,
Is never absent on the *author's night*,
Knows actresses and actors too—by sight;
So humble, that with Suett he'll confer,
Or take a pipe with plain Jack Bannister;
Nay, with an author has been known so free,
He once suggested a catastrophe;
In short, John dabbled till his head was turn'd.
His wife remonstrated, his neighbours mourn'd,
His customers were dropping off apace,
And Jack's affairs began to wear a piteous face.
One night his wife began a curtain-lecture;
'My dearest Johnny, husband, spouse, protector,
Take pity on your helpless babes and me,
Save us from ruin, you from bankruptcy;
Look to your business, leave these cursed plays,
And try again your old industrious ways.'
Jack, who was always scared at the Gazette,
And had some bits of scull uninjured yet,
Promised amendment, vow'd his wife spake reason,
'He would not see another play that season.'
Three stubborn fortnights Jack his promise kept,
Was late and early in his shop, eat, slept,
And walk'd and talk'd, like ordinary men;
No *wit*, but John the hatter once again;
Visits his club: when lo! one *fatal night*
His wife with horror view'd the well-known sight—
John's *hat*, *wig*, *snuffbox*—well she knew his tricks—
And Jack decamping at the hour of six.
Just at the counter's edge a playbill lay,
Announcing that 'Pizarro' was the play;
'Oh Johnny, Johnny, this is your old doing.'
Quoth Jack, 'Why, what the devil storm's a-brewing?
About a harmless play why all this fright?
I'll go and see it, if it's but for spite;
Zounds, woman! Nelson's* to be there to-night.'

* "A good clap-trap. Nelson has exhibited two or three times at both theatres, and advertised himself."

"N.B.—This was intended for Jack Bannister to speak; but the sage managers have chosen Miss *Heard*, except Miss Tidswell, the worst actress ever seen *or heard*. Now I remember I have promised the loan of my play. I will lend it *instantly*, and you shall get it ('pon honour!) by this day week.

"I must go and dress for the boxes! First night! Finding I have time, I transcribe the rest. Observe, you have read the last first; it begins thus:—The names I took from a little outline G. gave me. I have not read the play!

Ladies, ye've seen how Guzman's consort died,
Poor victim of a Spaniard brother's pride,
When Spanish honour through the world was blown,
And Spanish beauty for the best was known.*
In that romantic, unenlightened time,
A *breach* of *promise*† was a sort of crime;
Which of you handsome English ladies here,
But deems the penance bloody and severe?
A whimsical old Saragossa‡ fashion,
That a dead father's dying inclination
Should *live* to thwart a living daughter's passion,◊
Unjustly on the sex *we*‖ men exclaim,
Rail at *your*¶ vices, and commit the same;
Man is a promise-breaker from the womb,
And goes a promise-breaker to the tomb;
What need we instance here the lover's vow,
The sick man's purpose, or the great man's bow?**
The truth by few examples best is shown,
Instead of many which are better known;
Take poor Jack Incident's that's dead and gone.
Jack, &c., &c., &c.

"Now you have it all—how do you like it? I am going to see it recited!!!"

Alas for human hopes! The play was decisively damned, and the epilogue shared its fate. The tragedy turned out a miracle of dulness for the world to wonder at, although Lamb always insisted it had one fine line, which he was fond of repeating—sole relic of the else forgotten play. Kemble and Mrs. Siddons, the brother and sister of the drama, toiled through four acts and a half without applause or disapprobation; one speech was not more vapid than another; and so dead was the level of the dialogue, that, although its destiny was seen from afar, it presented no opportunity for hissing. But as the play drew towards a close, when, after a scene of frigid chiding not vivified by any fire of Kemble's own, Antonio drew his sword and plunged it into the heroine's bosom, the "sad civility" of the audience vanished, they started as at a real murder, and hooted the actors from the stage. "Philosophy,"

* "Four *easy* lines." † "For which the *heroine died*."
‡ "In *Spain!!*" ◊ "Two *neat* lines." ‖ "Or *you*."
¶ "Or *our*, as *they* have altered it." ** "Antithesis!!"

which could not "make a Juliet," sustained the author through the trial. He sat on one of the front benches of the pit, unmoved amid the storm. When the first act passed off without a hand, he expressed his satisfaction at the good sense of the house; "the proper season of applause had not arrived;" all was exactly as it should be. The second act proceeded to its close in the same uninterrupted calm; his friends became uneasy, but still his optimism prevailed; he could afford to wait. And though he did at last admit the great movement was somewhat tardy, and that the audience seemed rather patient than interested, he did not lose his confidence till the tumult arose, and then he submitted with quiet dignity to the fate of genius, too lofty to be understood by a world as yet in its childhood! Notwithstanding this rude repulse, Mr. Godwin retained his taste for the theatre to the last. On every first night of a new piece, whether tragedy, comedy, or farce, whether of friend or foe, he sat with gentle interest in a side box, and bore its fate, whatever it might be, with resignation, as he had done his own. The following is Lamb's account of the catastrophe rendered to Manning, in which the facetious charge against the unlucky author of "Violent and Satanical Pride of Heart" has reference to some banter which Lamb had encountered among his friends by the purposed title of his own play, "Pride's Cure," and his disquisition in its defence.

TO MR. MANNING.

"We are damned! Not the facetious epilogue itself could save us. For, as the editor of the Morning Post, quick-sighted gentleman! hath this morning truly observed (I beg pardon if I falsify his *words*, their profound *sense* I am sure I retain), both prologue and epilogue were worthy of accompanying such a piece; and, indeed (mark the profundity, Mister Manning), were received with proper indignation by such of the audience only as thought either worth attending to. Professor, thy glories wax dim! Again, the incomparable author of the True Briton declareth in *his* paper (bearing same date) that the epilogue was an indifferent attempt at humour and character, and failed in both. I forbear to mention the other papers, because I have not read them. Oh Professor, how different thy feelings now (quantum mutatus ab illo professore, qui in agris philosophiæ tantas victorias acquisivisti); how different thy proud feelings but one little week ago; thy anticipation of thy nine nights; those visionary claps, which have soothed thy soul by day and thy dreams by night! Calling in accidentally on the Professor while he was out, I was ushered into the study, and my nose quickly (most sagacious always) pointed me to four

tokens lying loose upon thy table, Professor, which indicated the violent and satanical pride of heart. Imprimis, there caught mine eye a list of six persons, thy friends, whom thou did meditate inviting to a sumptuous dinner on the Thursday, anticipating the profits of thy Saturday's play to answer charges; I was in the honoured file! Next, a stronger evidence of thy violent and almost satanical pride, lay a list of all the morning papers (from the Morning Chronicle downward to the Porcupine), with the places of their respective offices, where thou wast meditating to insert, and didst insert, an elaborate sketch of the story of thy play; stones in thy enemy's hand to bruise thee with, and severely wast thou bruised, oh Professor! nor do I know what oil to pour into thy wounds. Next—which convinced me, to a dead conviction, of thy pride, violent and almost satanical pride—lay a list of books, which thy un-tragedy-favoured pocket could never answer; Dodsley's old plays, Malone's Shakspeare (still harping upon thy play, thy philosophy abandoned meanwhile to superstitious minds); nay, I believe (if I can believe my memory), that the ambitious Encyclopædia itself was part of thy meditated acquisitions; but many a playbook was there. All these visions are *damned;* and thou, Professor, must read Shakspeare in future out of a common edition; and, hark ye, pray read him to a little better purpose! Last and strongest against thee (in colours manifest as the hand upon Belshazzar's wall) lay a volume of poems by C. Lloyd and C. Lamb. Thy heart misgave thee that thy assistant might possibly not have talent enough to furnish thee an epilogue! Manning, all these things came over my mind; all the gratulations that would have thickened upon him, and even some have glanced aside upon his humble friend; the vanity, and the fame, and the profits (the Professor is 500*l.* ideal money out of pocket by this failure, besides 200*l.* he would have got for the copyright); and now to muse upon thy altered physiognomy, thy pale and squalid appearance (a kind of *blue sickness* about the eyelids), and thy crest fallen, and thy proud demand of 200*l.* from thy bookseller changed to an uncertainty of his taking it at all, or giving thee full 50*l.* The Professor has won my heart by this *his* mournful catastrophe. You remember Marshall, who dined with him at my house; I met him in the lobby immediately after the damnation of the Professor's play, and he looked to me like an angel; his face was lengthened, and all over perspiration; I never saw such a care-fraught visage; I could have hugged him, I loved him so intensely. 'From every pore of him a perfume fell.' I have seen that man in many situations, and, from my soul, I think that a more godlike, honest

soul exists not in this world. The Professor's poor nerves trembling with the recent shock, he hurried him away to my house to supper, and there we comforted him as well as we could. He came to consult me about a change of catastrophe; but, alas! the piece was condemned long before that crisis. I at first humoured him with a specious proposition, but have since joined his true friends in advising him to give it up. He did it with a pang, and is to print it as *his*.

"L."

In another letter, a few days after, Lamb thus recurs to the subject, and closes the century in anticipation of a visit to his friend at Cambridge.

TO MR. MANNING.

"As for the Professor, he has actually begun to dive into Tavernier and Chardin's Persian Travels for a story to form a new drama for the sweet tooth of this fastidious age. Has not Bethlehem College a fair action for nonresidence against such professors? Are poets so *few* in *this age* that *he* must write poetry? *Is morals* a subject so exhausted that he must leave that line? Is the metaphysic well (without a bottom) drained dry?

"If I can guess at the wicked pride of the Professor's heart, I would take a shrewd wager that he disdains ever again to dip his pen in *prose*. Adieu, ye splendid theories! Farewell, dreams of political justice! Lawsuits, where I was counsel for Archbishop Fenelon versus my own mother, in the famous fire cause!

"Vanish from my mind, professors, one and all. I have metal more attractive on foot.

"Man of many snipes, I will sup with thee, Deo volente, et diabolo nolente, on Monday night, the 5th of January, in the new year, and crush a cup to the infant century.

"A word or two of my progress. Embark at six o'clock in the morning, with a fresh gale, on a Cambridge one-decker; very cold till eight at night; land at St. Mary's lighthouse, muffins and coffee upon table (or any other curious production of Turkey, or both Indies), snipes exactly at nine, punch to commence at ten, with argument; difference of opinion is expected to take place about eleven; perfect unanimity, with some haziness and dimness, before twelve. N.B. My single affection is not so singly wedded to snipes; but the curious and epicurean eye would also take a pleasure in beholding a delicate and well-chosen assortment of teals, ortolans, the

unctious and palate-soothing flesh of geese, wild and tame nightingales' brains, the sensorium of a young sucking pig, or any other Christmas dish, which I leave to the judgment of you and the cook of Gonville.

"C. LAMB."

CHAPTER VII.

[1801 to 1804.]

John Woodvil Rejected, Published, and Reviewed—Letters to Manning, Wordsworth, and Coleridge.

THE ominous postponement of Lamb's theatrical hopes was followed by their disappointment at the commencement of the century. He was favoured with at least one interview by the stately manager of Drury Lane, Mr. Kemble, who extended his highbred courtesy even to authors, whom he invariably attended to the door of his house in Great Russell-street, and bade them "beware of the step." Godwin's catastrophe had probably rendered him less solicitous to encounter a similar peril; which the fondest admirers of "John Woodvil" will not regret that it escaped. While the occasional roughness of its verse would have been felt as strange to ears as yet unused to the old dramatists whom Lamb's Specimens had not then made familiar to the town, the delicate beauties enshrined within it would scarcely have been perceived in the glare of the theatre. Exhibiting "the depth, and not the tumults of the soul;" presenting a female character of modest and retiring loveliness and noble purpose, but undistracted with any violent emotion; and developing a train of circumstances which work out their gentle triumphs on the heart only of the hero, without stirring accident or vivid grouping of persons, it would scarcely have supplied sufficient of coarse interest to disarm the critical spirit which it would certainly have encountered in all its bitterness. Lamb cheerfully consoled himself by publishing it; and, at the close of the year 1801, it appeared in a small volume, of humble appearance, with the "Fragments of Burton" (to which Lamb alluded in one of his previous letters), two of his quarto ballads, and the "Helen" of his sister.

The daring peculiarities attracted the notice of the Edinburgh reviewers, then in the infancy of their slashing career,

and it was immolated, in due form, by the self-constituted judges, who, taking for their motto "*Judex damnatur cùm nocens absolvitur*," treated our author as a criminal convicted of publishing, and awaiting his doom from their sentence. With the gay recklessness of power, at once usurped and irresponsible, they introduced Lord Mansfield's wild construction of the law of libel into literature; like him, holding every *primâ facie* guilty who should be caught in the act of publishing *a book*, and referring to the court to decide whether sentence should be passed on him. The article on "John Woodvil," which adorned their third number, is a curious example of the old style of criticism vivified by the impulses of youth. We wonder now, and probably the writer of the article, if he is living, will wonder with us, that a young critic should seize on a little eighteen-penny book, simply printed, without any preface; make elaborate merriment of its outline, and, giving no hint of its containing one profound thought or happy expression, leave the reader of the review at a loss to suggest a motive for noticing such vapid absurdities. This article is written in a strain of grave banter, the theme of which is to congratulate the world on having a specimen of the rudest condition of the drama, "a man of the age of Thespis." "At length," says the reviewer, "even in composition a mighty veteran has been born. Older than Æschylus, and with all the spirit of originality, in an age of poets who had before them the imitations of some thousand years, he comes forward to establish his claim to the ancient *hircus*, and to satiate the most remote desires of the philosophic antiquary." On this text the writer proceeds, selecting for his purpose whatever, torn from its context, appeared extravagant and crude, and ending without the slightest hint that there is merit or promise of merit in the volume. There certainly was no malice or desire to give pain in all this; it was merely the result of the thoughtless adoption, by lads of gayety and talents, of the old critical canons of the monthly reviews, which had been accustomed to damn all works of unpatronised genius in a more summary way and after a duller fashion. These very critics wrought themselves into good-nature as they broke into deeper veins of thought; grew gentler as they grew wiser; and sometimes, even when, like Balaam, they came to curse, like him, they ended with "blessing altogether," as in the review of the "Excursion," which, beginning in the old strain, "This will never do," proceeded to give examples of its noblest passages, and to grace them with worthiest eulogy. And now, the spirit of the writers thus ridiculed, especially of Wordsworth, breathes through the pages of this very review,

and they not seldom wear the "rich embroidery" of the language of the poet once scoffed at by their literary corporation as too puerile for the nursery.

Lamb's occasional connexion with newspapers introduced him to some of the editors and contributors of that day, who sought to repair the spirit wasted by perpetual exertion in the protracted conviviality of the evening, and these associates sometimes left poor Lamb with an aching head, and a purse exhausted by the claims of their necessities upon it. Among those was Fenwick, immortalized as the *Bigod* of "Elia," who edited several ill-fated newspapers in succession, and was the author of many libels, which did his employers no good and his majesty's government no harm. These connexions will explain some of the allusions in the following letters.

TO MR. MANNING.

"I heard that you were going to China,* with a commission from the Wedgwoods to collect hints for their pottery, and to teach the Chinese *perspective*. But I did not know that London lay in your way to Pekin. I am seriously glad of it, for I shall trouble you with a small present for the Emperor of Usbeck Tartary, as you go by his territories; it is a fragment of a 'Dissertation on the state of political parties in England at the end of the eighteenth century,' which will, no doubt, be very interesting to his Imperial Majesty. It was written originally in English for the use of the *two*-and-*twenty* readers of 'The Albion' (this *calculation* includes a printer, four pressmen, and a devil); but, becoming of no use when 'The Albion' stopped, I got it translated into Usbeck Tartar by my good friend Tibet Kulm, who is come to London with a *civil* invitation from the Cham to the English nation to go over to the worship of the Lama.

"'The Albion' is dead; dead as nail in door; and my revenues have died with it; but I am not as a man without hope. I have got a sort of an opening to 'The Morning Chronicle!!!' Mr. Manning, by means of that common dispenser of benevolence, Mister Dyer. I have not seen Perry, the editor, yet; but I am preparing a specimen. Shall have a difficult job to manage, for you must know that Mr. Perry, in common with the great body of the whigs, thinks 'The Albion' *very low*. I find I must rise a peg or so, be a little more decent, and less abusive; for, to confess the truth, I had arrived to an abomi-

* Mr. Manning had begun to be haunted with the idea of China, and to talk of going thither, which he accomplished some years afterward, without any motive but a desire to see that great nation.

nable pitch; I spared neither age nor sex when my cue was given me. *N'importe* (as they say in French), any climate will suit me. So you are about to bring your old face-making face to London. You could not come in a better time for my purposes; for I have just lost Rickman, a faint idea of whose character I sent you. He is gone to Ireland for a year or two, to make his fortune; and I have lost by his going what seems to me I never can recover—*a finished man.* His memory will be to me as the brazen serpent to the Israelites; I shall look up to it to keep me upright and honest. But he may yet bring back his honest face to England one day. I wish your affairs with the Emperor of China had not been *so urgent*, that you might have stayed in Great Britain a year or two longer, to have seen him; for, judging from *my own* experience, I almost dare pronounce you never saw his equal. I never saw a man that could be at all second or substitute for him in any sort.

"Imagine that what is here erased was an apology and explanation, perfectly satisfactory, you may be sure! for rating this man so highly at the expense of ——, and ——, and ——, and M——, and ——, and ——, and ——. But Mr. Burke has explained this phenomenon of our nature very prettily in his letter to a member of the National Assembly, or else in his appeal to the old Whigs, I forget which; do you remember an instance from Homer (who understood these matters tolerably well) of Priam driving away his other sons with expressions of wrath and bitter reproach, when Hector was just dead.

"I live where I did in a *private* manner, because I don't like *state*. Nothing so disagreeable to me as the clamours and applauses of the mob. For this reason I live in an *obscure* situation in one of the courts of the Temple.

"C L."

"I send you all of Coleridge's letters* to me which I have preserved: some of them are upon the subject of my play. I also send you Kemble's two letters, and the prompter's courteous epistle, with a curious critique on 'Pride's Cure, by a young Physician from EDINBRO',' who modestly suggests quite another kind of plot. These are monuments of my disappointment which I like to preserve.

"In Coleridge's letters you will find a good deal of amusement, to see genuine talent struggling against a pompous dis-

* Lamb afterward, in some melancholy mood, destroyed all Coleridge's letters, and was so vexed with what he had done that he never preserved any letters which he received afterward.

play of it I also send you the Professor's letter to me (careful professor! to conceal his *name* even from his correspondent), ere yet the Professor's pride was cured. Oh! monstrous and almost satanical pride!

"You will carefully keep all (except the Scotch Doctor's, *which burn*) *in statu quo*, till I come to claim mine own.

"C. LAMB."

The following is in reply to a pressing invitation from Mr. Wordsworth to visit him at the Lakes.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"I ought before this to have replied to your very kind invitation into Cumberland. With you and your sister I could gang anywhere; but I am afraid whether I shall ever be able to afford so desperate a journey. Separate from the pleasure of your company, I don't now care if I never see a mountain in my life. I have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments as any of you mountaineers can have done with dead nature. The lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet-street, the innumerable trades, tradesmen, and customers, coaches, wagons, playhouses; all the bustle and wickedness round about Covent Garden; the watchmen, drunken scenes, rattles; life awake, if you awake, at all hours of the night; the impossibility of being dull in Fleet-street; the crowds, the very dirt and mud, the sun shining upon houses and pavements, the printshops, the old bookstalls, parsons cheapening books, coffee-houses, steams of soups from kitchens, the pantomimes—London itself a pantomime and masquerade—all these things work themselves into my mind, and feed me without a power of satiating me. The wonder of these sights impel me into night-walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fulness of joy at so much life. All these emotions must be strange to you; so are your rural emotions to me. But consider, what must I have been doing all my life not to have lent great portions of my heart with usury to such scenes?

"My attachments are all local, purely local; I have no passion (or have had none since I was in love, and then it was the spurious engendering of poetry and books) to groves and valleys. The rooms where I was born, the furniture which has been before my eyes all my life, a bookcase which has followed me about, like a faithful dog (only exceeding him in knowledge), wherever I have moved; old chairs, old tables, streets, squares, where I have sunned myself, my old school—

these are my mistresses—have I not enough without your mountains? I do not envy you. I should pity you did I not know that the mind will make friends of anything. Your sun, and moon, and skies, and hills, and lakes affect me no more, or scarcely come to me in more venerable characters, than as a gilded room with tapestry and tapers, where I might live with handsome visible objects. I consider the clouds above me but as a roof beautifully painted, but unable to satisfy the mind; and at last, like the pictures of the apartment of a connoisseur, unable to afford him any longer a pleasure. So fading upon me, from disuse, have been the beauties of Nature, as they have been confinedly called; so ever fresh, and green, and warm are all the inventions of men and assemblies of men in this great city. I should certainly have laughed with dear Joanna.*

"Give my kindest love *and my* sister's to D. and yourself. And a kiss from me to little Barbara Lewthwaite.† Thank you for liking my play!

"C. L."

The next two letters were written to Manning when on a tour upon the Continent.

TO MR. MANNING.

"*Apropos*, I think you wrong about my play. All the omissions are right; and the supplementary scene, in which Sandford narrates the manner in which his master is affected, is the best in the book. It stands where a hodgepodge of German puerilites used to stand. I insist upon it that you like that scene. Love me, love that scene. I will now transcribe the 'Londoner' (No. 1), and wind up all with affection and humble servant at the end."

[Here was transcribed the essay called "The Londoner," which was published some years afterward in "The Reflector," and which forms part of Lamb's collected works.] He then proceeds:—

"'What is all this about?' said Mrs. Shandy. 'A story of a cock and a bull,' said Yorick: and so it is; but Manning will take good-naturedly what *God will send him* across the water; only I hope he won't *shut* his *eyes* and *open* his *mouth*, as the children say, for that is the way to *gape* and not to *read*.

* Alluding to the inscriptions of Wordsworth's, entitled "Joanna," containing a magnificent description of the effects of laughter echoing amid the great mountains of Westmoreland.

† Alluding to Wordsworth's poem, "The Pet Lamb."

Manning, continue your laudable purpose of making me your register. I will render back all your remarks; and *I, not you*, shall have received usury by having read them. In the mean time, may the Great Spirit have you in his keeping, and preserve our Englishman from the inoculation of frivolity and sin upon French earth.

"*Allons* (or what is it you say), instead of *good-by*?

"Mary sends her kind remembrance, and covets the remarks equally with me.

"C. LAMB.

"Monday, 15th February, 1802."

TO MR. MANNING.

My dear Manning—I must positively write, or I shall miss you at Toulouse. I sit here like a decayed minute-hand (I lie; *that* does not *sit*), and being myself the exponent of no time, take no heed how the clocks about me are going. You possibly, by this time, may have explored all Italy, and toppled unawares into Etna, while you went too near those rotten-jawed, gap-toothed, old worn-out chaps of hell, while I am meditating a quiescent letter to the honest postmaster of Toulouse. But, in case you should not have been *felo de se*, this is to tell you that your letter was quite to my palate; in particular, your just remarks upon Industry, cursed Industry (though indeed you left me to explore the reason), were highly relishing. I've often wished I lived in the golden age, when shepherds lay stretched upon flowers—the genius there is in a man's natural, idle face, that has not learned his multiplication table! before doubt, and propositions, and corollaries got into the world!

* * * * * *

"Apropos: if you should go to Florence or Rome, inquire what works are extant in gold, silver, bronze, or marble, of Benvenuto Cellini, a Florentine artist, whose Life, doubtless, you have read; or, if not, without controversy you must read, so hark ye, send for it immediately from Lane's circulating library. It is always put among the romances, very properly; but you have read it, I suppose. In particular, inquire at Florence for his colossal bronze statue (in the grand square, or somewhere) of Perseus. You may read the story in 'Tooke's Pantheon.' Nothing material has transpired in these parts. Coleridge has indited a violent philippic against Mr. Fox in the 'Morning Post,' which is a compound of expressions of humility, gentleman-ushering-in most arrogant charges. It will do Mr. Fox no real injury among those that know him."

In the summer of 1802, Lamb, in company with his sister, visited the lakes, and spent three weeks with Coleridge at Keswick. There he also met the true annihilator of the slave-trade, Thomas Clarkson, who was then enjoying a necessary respite from his stupendous labours, in a cottage on the borders of Ulswater. Lamb had no taste for oratorical philanthropy; but he felt the grandeur and simplicity of Clarkson's character, and appreciated the unexampled self-denial with which he steeled his heart, trembling with nervous sensibility, to endure intimate acquaintance with the foulest details of guilt and wickedness which he lived, and could have died to abolish. Wordsworth was not in the lake-country during Lamb's visit; but he made amends by spending some time in town after Lamb's return, and then left it for Yorkshire to be married. Lamb's following letters show that he made some advances towards fellowship with the hills which at a distance he had treated so cavalierly; but his feelings never heartily associated with "the bare earth, and mountains bare," which sufficed Wordsworth; he rather loved to cleave to the little hints and suggestions of nature in the midst of crowded cities. In his latter years I have heard him, when longing after London among the pleasant fields of Enfield, declare that his love of natural scenery would be abundantly satisfied by the patches of long waving grass and the stunted trees that blacken in the old-churchyard nooks which you may yet find bordering on Thames-street.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

1802.

"Dear Coleridge—I thought of not writing till we had performed some of our commissions; but we have been hindered from setting about them, which yet shall be done to a tittle. We got home very pleasantly on Sunday. Mary is a good deal fatigued, and finds the difference of going *to* a place and coming *from* it. I feel that I shall remember your mountains to the last day I live. They haunt me perpetually. I am like a man who has been falling in love unknown to himself, which he finds out when he leaves the lady. I do not remember any very strong impression while they were present; but, being gone, their mementoes are shelved in my brain. We passed a very pleasant little time with the Clarksons. The Wordsworths are at Montague's rooms, near neighbours to us.* They dined with us yesterday, and I was their guide to Bartlemy fair!"

* * * * * *

* Mr. Basil Montague and his lady, who were, during Lamb's life, among his most cordial and most honoured friends.

TO MR. MANNING.

"24th Sept., 1802, London.

"My dear Manning—Since the date of my last letter I have been a traveller. A strong desire seized me of visiting remote regions. My first impulse was to go and see Paris. It was a trivial objection to my aspiring mind, that I did not understand a word of the language, since I certainly intend some time in my life to see Paris, and equally certainly intend never to learn the language; therefore that could be no objection. However, I am very glad I did not go, because you had left Paris (I see) before I could have set out. I believe, Stoddart promising to go with me another year prevented that plan. My next scheme (for to my restless ambitious mind London was become a bed of thorns) was to visit the far-famed peak in Derbyshire, where the Devil sits, they say, without breeches. *This* my purer mind rejected as indelicate; and my final resolve was a tour to the lakes. I set out with Mary to Keswick, without giving Coleridge any notice, for my time, being precious, did not admit of it. He received us with all the hospitality in the world, and gave up his time to show us all the wonders of the country. He dwells upon a small hill by the side of Keswick, in a comfortable house, quite enveloped on all sides by a net of mountains: great floundering bears and monsters they seemed, all couchant and asleep. We got in in the evening, travelling in a post-chaise from Penrith, in the midst of a gorgeous sunshine, which transmuted all the mountains into colours, purple, &c., &c. We thought we had got into fairy land. But that went off (and it never came again; while we stayed we had no more fine sunsets); and we entered Coleridge's comfortable study just in the dusk, when the mountains were all dark with clouds upon their heads. Such an impression I never received from objects of sight before, nor do I suppose that I can ever again. Glorious creatures, fine old fellows, Skiddaw, &c. I never shall forget ye, how ye lay about that night, like an intrenchment; gone to bed, as it seemed, for the night, but promising that ye were to be seen in the morning. Coleridge had got a blazing fire in his study, which is a large, antique, ill-shaped room, with an oldfashioned organ, never played upon, big enough for a church, shelves of scattered folios, an Eolian harp, and an old sofa, half bed, &c And all looking out upon the fading view of Skiddaw and his broad-breasted brethren: what a night! Here we stayed three full weeks, in which time I visited Wordsworth's cottage, where we stayed a day or two with

the Clarksons (good people, and most hospitable, at whose house we tarried one day and night), and saw Lloyd. The Wordsworths were gone to Calais. They have since been in London, and passed much time with us: he is now gone into Yorkshire to be married. So we have seen Keswick, Grasmere, Ambleside, Ulswater, (where the Clarksons live), and a place at the other end of Ulswater, I forget the name,* to which we travelled on a very sultry day, over the middle of Helvellyn. We have clambered up to the top of Skiddaw, and I have waded up the bed of Lodore. In fine, I have satisfied myself that there is such a thing as that which tourists call *romantic*, which I very much suspected before: they make such a spluttering about it, and toss their splendid epithets around them, till they give as dim a light as at four o'clock next morning the lamps do after an illumination. Mary was excessively tired when she got about half way up Skiddaw, but we came to a cold rill (than which nothing can be imagined more cold, running over cold stones), and with the re-enforcement of a draught of cold water she surmounted it most manfully. Oh, its fine black head, and the bleak air atop of it, with a prospect of mountains all about and about, making you giddy; and then Scotland afar off, and the border countries so famous in song and ballad! It was a day that will stand out like a mountain, I am sure, in my life. But I am returned (I have now been come home near three weeks—I was a month out), and you cannot conceive the degradation I felt at first, from being accustomed to wander as free as air among mountains, and bathe in rivers without being controlled by any one, to come home and *work*. I felt very *little*. I had been dreaming I was a very great man; but that is going off, and I find I shall conform, in time, to that state of life to which it has pleased God to call me. Besides, after all, Fleet-street and the Strand are better places to live in for good and all than amid Skiddaw. Still, I turn back to those great places where I wandered about, participating in their greatness. After all, I could not *live* in Skiddaw. I could spend a year, two, three years among them, but I must have a prospect of seeing Fleet-street at the end of that time, or I should mope and pine away, I know. Still, Skiddaw is a fine creature. My habits are changing, I think, *i. e.*, from drunk to sober. Whether I shall be happier or no remains to be proved. I shall certainly be more happy in a morning; but whether I shall not sacrifice the fat, and the marrow, and the kidneys, *i. e.*, the night, glorious care-drowning night, that heals all

* Patterdale.

our wrongs, pours wine into our mortifications, changes the scene from indifferent and flat to bright and brilliant! Oh Manning, if I should have formed a diabolical resolution, by the time you come to England, of not admitting any spirituous liquors into my house, will you be my guest on such shameworthy terms? Is life, with such limitations, worth trying? The truth is, that my liquors bring a nest of friendly harpies about my house, who consume me. This is a pitiful tale to be read at St. Gothard, but it is just now nearest my heart. F—— is a ruined man. He is hiding himself from his creditors, and has sent his wife and children into the country. ——, my other drunken companion (that has been: nam hic cæstus artemque repono), is turned editor of a Naval Chronicle. Godwin continues a steady friend, though the same facility does not remain of visiting him often. Holcroft is not yet come to town. I expect to see him, and will deliver your message. Things come crowding in to say, and no room for 'em. Some things are too little to be told, *i. e.*, to have a preference; some are too big and circumstantial. Thanks for yours, which was most delicious. Would I had been with you, benighted, &c. I fear my head is turned with wandering. I shall never be the same acquiescent being. Farewell; write again quickly, for I shall not like to hazard a letter, not knowing where the fates have carried you. Farewell, my dear fellow.

"C. LAMB."

Lamb was fond of Latin composition when at school, and was then praised for it. He was always fond of reading Latin verse, and late in life taught his sister to read it. About this time he hazarded the following Latin letter to Coleridge, of whose classical acquirements he stood in awe.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Carolus Agnus Coleridgio suo S.

"Carissime—Scribis, ut nummos scilicet epistolarios solvam et postremo in Tartara abeam: immo tu potius Tartaricum (ut aiunt) deprehendisti, qui me vernaculâ meâ linguâ pro scribâ conductitio per tot annos satis eleganter usum ad Latinè impure et canino fere ore latrandum per tuasmet epistolas benè compositas et concinnatas percellire studueris. Conabor tamen: Attamen vereor, ut Ædes istas nostri Christi, inter quas tantâ diligentiâ magistri improbâ bonis literulis, quasi per clysterem quendam injectis, infrà supràque olim penitùs imbutus fui, Barnesii et Marklandii doctissimorum virorum nominibus adhuc gaudentes, barbarismis meis peregrinis et aliunde

quæsitis valde dehonestavero. Sed pergere quocunque placet. Adeste igitur, quotquot estis, conjugationum declinationumve turmæ, terribilia spectra, et tu imprimis ades, Umbra et Imago maxima obsoletæ (Diis gratiæ) Virgæ, quâ novissime in mentem receptâ, horrescunt subitò natales, et parum deest quo minùs braccas meas ultro usque ad crura demittam, et ipse puer pueriliter ejulem.

"Ista tua Carmina Chamouiana satis grandia esse mihi constat; sed hoc mihi nonnihil displicet, quòd in iis illæ montium Grisosonum inter se responsiones totidem reboant anglicè, *God, God*, haud aliter atque temet audivi tuas montes Cumbrianas resonare docentes, *Tod, Tod*, nempe Doctorem infelicem: vocem certe haud Deum Sonantem. Pro cæteris plaudo.

"Itidem comparationes istas tuas satis callidas et lepidas certè novi: sed quid hoc ad verum? cum illi Consulari viro et *mentem irritabilem* istum Julianum; et etiam *astutias frigidulas* quasdem Augusto propriores, nequaquam congruenter uno afflatu comparationis causâ insedisse affirmaveris: necnon nescio quid similitudinis etiam cum Tiberio tertio in loco solicite produxeris. Quid tibi equidem cum uno vel altero Cæsare, cùm universi Duodecicm ad comparationes tuas se ultro tulerint? Præterea, vetustati adnutans, comparationes iniquas odi.

"Istas Wordsworthianas nuptias (vel potius cujusdam *Edmundii* tui) te retulisse mirificum gaudeo. Valeas, Maria, fortunata nimium, et antiquæ illæ Mariæ Virgini (comparatione plusquam Cæsareanâ) forsitan comparanda, quoniam 'beata inter mulieres:' et etiam fortasse Wordsworthium ipsum tuum maritum: Angelo Salutatori æquare fas erit, quoniam e Cœlo (ut ille) descendunt et Musæ et ipsæ Musicolæ: at Wordsworthium Musarum observantissimum semper novi. Necnon te quoque affinitate hâc nova, Dorothea, gratulor: et tu certe alterum *donum Dei*.

"Istum Ludum, quem tu, Coleridgi, Americanum garris, a Ludo (ut Ludi sunt) maximè abhorrentem prætereo: nempe quid ad Ludum attinet, totius illæ gentis Columbianæ, a nostrâ gente, eadem stirpe ortâ, ludi singuli causa voluntatem perperam alienare? Quæso ego materiam ludi: te Bella ingeris.

"Denique valeas, et quid de Latinitate meâ putes, dicas: facias ut opossum illum nostrum volantem vel (ut tu malis) quendam Piscem errabundum, a me salvum et pulcherrimum esse jubeas. Valeant uxor tua cum Hartleiio nostro. Soror mea salva est et ego: vos et ipsa salvere jubet. Ulterius progrediri non liquet: homo sum æratus.

"P.S. Pene mihi exciderat, apud me esse Librorum a Johanno Miltono Latinè scriptorum volumina duo, quæ (Deo volente) cum cæteris tuis libris ocyùs citiùs per Maria ad te

missura curabo: sed me in hoc tali genere rerum nullo modo *festinantem* novisti: habes confitentem reum. Hoc solum dici restat, prædicta volumina pulchra esse et omnia opera Latina J. M. in se continere. Circa defensionem istam Pro Pop°. Ang°. acerrimam in præsens ipse præclaro gaudio moror.

"Jussa tua Stuartina faciam ut diligenter colam.
"Iterum iterumque valeas:
"Et facias memor sis nostri."

The publication of the second volume of the "Anthology" gave occasion to the following letter:—

TO MR. COLERIDGE

"In the next edition of the 'Anthology' (which Phœbus avert, and those nine other wandering maids also!) please to blot out gentle-hearted, and substitute drunken-dog, ragged head, seld-shaven, odd-eyed, stuttering, or any other epithet which truly and properly belongs to the gentleman in question. And for Charles read Tom, or Bob, or Richard, for mere delicacy. Hang you, I was beginning to forgive you, and believe in earnest that the lugging in of my proper name was purely unintentional on your part, when, looking back for further conviction, stares me in the face Charles Lamb of the *India House*. *Now* I am convinced it was all done in malice, heaped, sack-upon-sack, congregated, studied malice. You dog! your 141st page shall not save you. I own I was just ready to acknowledge that there is a something not unlike good poetry in that page, if you had not run into the unintelligible abstraction-fit about the manner of the Deity's making spirits perceive his presence. God, nor created thing alive, can receive any honour from such thin, show-box attributes. By-the-by, where did you pick up that scandalous piece of private history about the angel and the Duchess of Devonshire? If it is a fiction of your own, why truly it is a very modest one for you. Now I do affirm that Lewti is a very beautiful poem. I *was* in earnest when I praised it. It describes a silly species of one not the wisest of passions; *therefore* it cannot deeply affect a disenthralled mind. But such imagery, such novelty, such delicacy, and such versification, never got into an 'Anthology' before. I am only sorry that the cause of all the passionate complaint is not greater than the trifling circumstance of Lewti being out of temper one day. Gaulberto certainly has considerable originality, but sadly wants finishing. It is, as it is, one of the very best in the book. Next to Lewti I like the Raven, which has a good deal of humour. I was pleased to

ee it again, for you once sent it me, and I have lost the letter which contained it. Now I am on the subject of Anthologies, I must say I am sorry the old pastoral way is fallen into dis repute. The gentry which now endite sonnets are certainly the legitimate descendants of the ancient shepherds. The same simpering face of description, the old family face, is visibly continued in the line. Some of their ancestors' labours are yet to be found in Allan Ramsay's and Jacob Tonson's Miscellanies. But miscellanies decaying, and the old pastoral way dying of mere want, their successors (driven from their paternal acres) nowadays settle and live upon Magazines and Anthologies. This race of men are uncommonly addicted to superstition: some of them are idolators and worship the moon; others deify qualities, as love, friendship, sensibility; or bare accidents, as Solitude. Grief and Melancholy have their respective altars and temples among them, as the heathens builded theirs to Mors, Febris, Pallor, &c. They all agree in ascribing a peculiar sanctity to the number fourteen. One of their own legislators affirmeth, that whatever exceeds that number 'encroacheth upon the province of the elegy;' *vice versa*, whatever 'cometh short of that number abutteth upon the premises of the epigram.' I have been able to discover but few *images* in their temples, which, like the caves of Delphos of old, are famous for giving *echoes*. They impute a religious importance to the letter O, whether because by its roundness it is thought to typify the moon, the principal goddess, or for its analogies to their own labours, all ending where they began, or for what other high and mystical reference I have never been able to discover, but I observe they never begin with invocations to their gods without it, except, indeed, one insignificant sect among them, who use the Doric A, pronounced like Ah! broad, instead. These boast to have restored the old Dorian mood.

"C. L."

The following letter imbodies in strong language Lamb's disgust at the *rational* mode of educating children. While he gave utterance to a deep and hearted feeling of jealousy for the old delightful books of fancy which were banished by the sense of Mrs. Barbauld, he cherished great respect for that lady's power as a true English prose writer; and spoke often of her "Essay on Inconsistent Expectations" as alike bold and original in thought and elegant in style.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"I read daily your political essays. I was particularly pleased with 'Once a Jacobin:' though the argument is obvious enough, the style was less swelling than your things sometimes are, and it was plausible *ad populum*. A vessel has just arrived from Jamaica with the news of poor ——'s death. He died at Jamaica of the yellow fever. His course was rapid, and he had been very foolish, but I believe there was more of kindness and warmth in him than in almost any other of our schoolfellows. The annual meeting of the Blues is to-morrow, at the London Tavern, where poor Sammy dined with them two years ago, and attracted the notice of all by the singular foppishness of his dress. When men go off the stage so early, it scarce seems a noticeable thing in their epitaphs whether they have been wise or silly in their lifetime.

"I am glad the snuff and Pi-pos's* books please. 'Goody Two Shoes' is almost out of print. Mrs. Barbauld's stuff has banished all the old classics of the nursery; and the shopman at Newbery's hardly deigned to reach them off an old exploded corner of a shelf when Mary asked for them. Mrs. B.'s and Mrs. Trimmer's nonsense lay in piles about. Knowledge insignificant and vapid as Mrs. B.'s books convey, it seems, must come to a child in the *shape* of *knowledge*, and his empty noddle must be turned with conceit of his own powers when he has learned that a horse is an animal, and Billy is better than a horse, and such like: instead of that beautiful interest in wild tales which made the child a man, while all the time he suspected himself to be no bigger than a child. Science has succeeded to poetry no less in the little walks of children than with men. Is there no possibility of averting this sore evil? Think of what you would have been now, if, instead of being fed with tales and old wives' fables in childhood, you had been crammed with geography and natural history!

"Hang them! I mean the cursed reasoning crew, those blights and blasts of all that is human in man and child.

"As to the translations, let me do two or three hundred lines, and then do you try the nostrums upon Stuart in any way you please. If they go down, I will bray more. In fact, if I got or could but get 50*l.* a year only, in addition to what I have, I should live in affluence.

"Have you anticipated it, or could not you give a parallel of Bonaparte with Cromwell, particularly as the contrast in their deeds affecting *foreign* states? Cromwell's interference for the

* A nickname of endearment for little Hartley Coleridge.

Albigenses, B.'s against the Swiss. Then religion would come in; and Milton and you could rant about our countrymen of that period. This is a hasty suggestion, and the more hasty because I want my supper. I have just finished Chapman's Homer. Did you ever read it? It has most the continuous power of interesting you all along, like a rapid original, of any; and, in the uncommon excellence of the more finished parts, goes beyond Fairfax or any of 'em, The metre is fourteen syllables, and capable of all sweetness and grandeur. Cowper's ponderous blank verse detains you every step with some heavy Miltonism; Chapman gallops off with you his own free pace. Take a simile for example. The council breaks up—

'Being abroad, the earth was overlaid
With flockers to them, that came forth; as when of frequent bees
Swarms rise out of a hollow rock, repairing the degrees
Of their egression endlessly, with ever rising new
From forth their sweet nest; as their store, still as it faded, grew,
And never would cease sending forth her clusters to the spring,
They still crowd out so; this flock here, that there, belabouring
The loaded flowers. So,' &c., &c.

"What *endless egression of phrases* the dog commands!

"Take another, Agamemnon wounded, bearing his wound heroically for the sake of the army (look below) to a woman in labour.

'He, with his lance, sword, mighty stones, pour'd his heroic wreak
On other squadrons of the foe, whiles yet warm blood did break
Through his cleft veins: but when the wound was quite exhaust and crude.
The eager anguish did approve his princely fortitude.
As when most sharp and bitter pangs distract a labouring dame,
Which the divine Ilithiæ, that rule the painful frame
Of human childbirth, pour on her; the Ilithiæ that are
The daughters of Saturnia; with whose extreme repair
The woman in her travail strives to take the worst it gives;
With thought, it *must be, 'tis love's fruit, the end for which she lives;*
The mean to make herself new born, what comforts will redound:
So,' &c.

"I will tell you more about Chapman and his peculiarities in my next. I am much interested in him.

"Yours, ever affectionately, and Pi-pos's,

"C. L."

The following fragment of a letter about this time to Coleridge refers to an offer of Coleridge to supply Lamb with literal translations from the German, which he might versify for the "Morning Post," for the increase of Lamb's slender income.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Dear Coleridge—Your offer about the German poems is exceedingly kind; but I do not think it a wise speculation,

because the time it would take you to put them into prose would be nearly as great as if you versified them. Indeed I am sure you could do the one nearly as soon as the other; so that, instead of a division of labour, it would be only a multiplication. But I will think of your offer in another light. I dare say I could find many things of a light nature to suit that paper, which you would not object to pass upon Stuart as your own, and I should come in for some light profits, and Stuart think the more highly of your assiduity. 'Bishop Hall's Characters' I know nothing about, having never seen them But I will reconsider your offer, which is very plausible; for as to the drudgery of going every day to an editor with my scraps, like a pedler, for him to pick out and tumble about my ribands and posies, and to wait in his lobby, &c., no money could make up for the degradation. You are in too high request with him to have anything unpleasant of that sort to submit to.

* * * * * *

[The letter refers to several articles and books which Lamb promised to send to Coleridge, and proceeds:]

"You must write me word whether the cap and Miltons are worth paying carriage for. You have a Milton; but it is pleasanter to eat one's own peas out of one's own garden, than to buy them by the peck at Covent Garden; and a book reads the better which is our own, and has been so long known to us, that we know the topography of its blots, and dogs-ears, and can trace the dirt in it to having read it at tea with buttered muffins, or over a pipe, which I think is the maximum. But, Coleridge, you must accept these little things, and not think of returning money for them, for I do not set up for a factor or general agent. As for fantastic debts of 15*l.*, I'll think you were dreaming, and not trouble myself seriously to attend to you. My bad Latin you properly correct; but *natales* for *nates* was an inadvertency: I knew better. *Progrediri*, or *progredi*, I thought indifferent, my authority being Ainsworth. However, as I have got a fit of Latin, you will now and then indulge me with an *epistola*. I pay the postage of this, and propose doing it by turns. In that case I can now and then write to you without remorse; not that you would mind the money, but you have not always ready cash to answer small demands, the *epistolarii nummi*.

"Your 'Epigram on the Sun and Moon in Germany' is admirable. Take 'em all together, they are as good as Harrington's. I will muster up all the conceits I can, and you shall

nave a packet some day. You and I together can answer all demands, surely: you, mounted on a terrible charger (like Homer, in the Battle of the Books), at the head of the cavalry: I will lead the light horse. I have just heard from Stoddart. Allen and he intend taking Keswick in their way home. Allen wished particularly to have it a secret that he is in Scotland, and wrote to me accordingly very urgently. As luck was, I had told not above three or four; but Mary had told Mrs. G——, of Christ's Hospital!

"For the present, farewell: never forgetting love to Pipos and his friends.

"C. LAMB."

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Wednesday night.

"Observe, there comes to you, by the Kendal wagon to morrow, the illustrious 4th of November, a box, containing the Miltons, the strange American Bible, with White's brief note, to which you will attend; 'Baxter's Holy Commonwealth,' for which you stand indebted to me 3*s.* 6*d.*; an odd volume of Montaigne, being of no use to me, I having the whole; certain books belonging to Wordsworth, as do also the strange thick-hoofed shoes, which are very much admired at in London. All these sundries I commend to your most strenuous looking after. If you find the Miltons in certain parts dirtied and soiled with a crumb of right Gloucester blacked in the candle (my usual supper), or, peradventure, a stray ash of tobacco wafted into the crevices, look to that passage more especially: depend upon it, it contains good matter. I have got your little Milton, which, as it contains 'Salmasius'—and I make a rule of never hearing but one side of the question (why should I distract myself?)—I shall return to you when I pick up the *Latina opera.* The first Defence is the greatest work among them, because it is uniformly great, and such as is befitting the very mouth of a great nation, speaking for itself. But the second Defence, which is but a succession of splendid episodes, slightly tied together, has one passage which, if you have not read, I conjure you to lose no time, but read it; it is his consolations in his blindness, which had been made a reproach to him. It begins whimsically, with poetical flourishes about Tiresias and other blind worthies (which still are mainly interesting as displaying his singular mind, and in what degree poetry entered into his daily soul, not by fits and impulses, but ingrained and innate), but the concluding page, *i. e.*, of *this passage* (not the *Defensis*), which you will easily find, divested of all brags and flourishes, gives so rational,

so true an enumeration of his comforts, so human, that it cannot be read without the deepest interest. Take one touch of the religious part:—'Et sane haud ultima Dei cura cæci (*we blind folks*, I understand it; not *nos* for *ego*) sumus; qui nos, quominus quicquam aliud præter ipsum cernere valemus, eo clementius atque benignius respicere dignatur. Væ qui illudit nos, væ qui lædit, execratione publica devovendo; nos ab injuriis hominum non modo incolumes, sed pene sacros divina lex reddidit, divinus favor; nec tam *oculorum hebetudine* quam *cœlestium alarum umbrâ* has nobis fecisse tenebras videtur, factas illustrare rursus interiore ac longe præstabiliore lumine haud raro solet. Huc refero, quod et amici officiosius nunc etiam quam solebant, colunt, observant, adsunt; quod et nonnulli sunt, quibuscum Pyladeas atque Theseas alternare voces verorum amicorum liceat,

> 'Vade gubernaculum mei pedis,
> Da manum ministro amico.
> Da collo manum tuum, ductor viæ ero tibi.'

All this, and much more, is highly pleasing to know. But you may easily find it; and I don't know why I put down so many words about it, but for the pleasure of writing to you, and the want of another topic.

"Yours ever,

"C. LAMB.

"To-morrow I expect with anxiety S. T. C.'s letter to Mr Fox."

The year 1803 passed without any event to disturb the dull current of Lamb's toilsome life. He wrote nothing this year except some newspaper squibs, and the delightful little poem on the death of Hester Savory. This he sent to Manning at Paris, with the following account of its subject:—"Dear Manning, I send you some verses I have made on the death of a young Quaker you may have heard me speak of as being in love with for some years while I lived at Pentonville, though I had never spoken to her in my life. She died about a month since. If you have interest with the Abbé de Lille, you may get 'em translated: he has done as much for the Georgics." The verses must have been written in the very happiest of Lamb's serious moods. I cannot refrain from the luxury of quoting the conclusion, though many readers have it by heart

> "My sprightly neighbour, gone before
> To that unknown and silent shore!
> Shall we not meet as heretofore,
> Some summer morning,

When from thy cheerful eyes a ray
Hath struck a bliss upon the day,
A bliss that could not go away,
A sweet forewarning?"

The following letters were written to Manning, at Paris, while still haunted with the idea of oriental adventure.

TO MR. MANNING.

"My dear Manning—The general scope of your letter afforded no indications of insanity, but some particular points raised a scruple. For God's sake don't think any more of 'Independent Tartary.' What are you to do among such Ethiopians? Is there no *lineal descendant* of Prester John? Is the chair empty? Is the sword unswayed? Depend upon it they'll never make you their king as long as any branch of that great stock is remaining. I tremble for your Christianity. Read Sir John Mandeville's travels to cure you, or come over to England. There is a Tartar man now exhibiting at Exeter Change. Come and talk with him, and hear what he says first. Indeed, he is no very favourable specimen of his countrymen! But, perhaps, the best thing you can do is to *try* to get the idea out of your head. For this purpose repeat to yourself every night, after you have said your prayers, the words Independent Tartary, Independent Tartary, two or three times, and associate with them the *idea* of *oblivion* ('tis Hartley's method with obstinate memories), or say, Independent, Independent, have I not already got an *independence?* That was a clever way of the old Puritans, pun-divinity. My dear friend, think what a sad pity it would be to bury such *parts* in heathen countries, among nasty, unconversable, horse-belching, Tartar people! Some say they are Cannibals; and then, conceive a Tartar-fellow *eating* my friend, and adding the *cool malignity* of mustard and vinegar! I am afraid 'tis the reading of Chaucer has misled you; his foolish stories about Cambuscan, and the ring, and the horse of brass. Believe me, there are no such things, 'tis all the poet's *invention;* but if there was such darling things as old Chaucer sings, I would *up* behind you on the horse of brass, and frisk off for Prester John's country. But these all are tales; a horse of brass never flew, and a king's daughter never talked with birds! The Tartars, really, are a cold, insipid, smouchey set. You'll be sadly moped (if you are not eaten) among them. Pray *try* and cure yourself. Take hellebore (the counsel is Horace's, 'twas none of my thought *originally*). Shave yourself oftener. Eat no saffron, for saffron-eaters contract a terrible Tartar-like yellow. Pray to avoid the fiend. Eat nothing

that gives the heartburn. *Shave the upper lip.* Go about like a European. Read no books of voyages (they are nothing but lies), only now and then a romance, to keep the fancy *under*. Above all, don't go to any sights of *wild beasts*. *That has been your ruin.* Accustom yourself to write familiar letters, on common subjects, to your friends in England, such as are of a moderate understanding. And think about common things more. I supped last night with Rickman, and met a merry *natural* captain, who pleases himself vastly with once having made a pun at Otaheite in the O. language.* 'Tis the same man who said Shakspeare he liked, because he was so *much of the gentleman*. Rickman is a man 'absolute in all numbers.' I think I may one day bring you acquainted, if you do not go to Tartary first; for you'll never come back. Have a care, my dear friend, of Anthropophagi! their stomachs are always craving. 'Tis terrible to be weighed out at fivepence a pound. To sit at table (the reverse of fishes in Holland), not as a guest, but as a meat.

"God bless you: do come to England. Air and exercise may do great things. Talk with some minister. Why not your father?

"God dispose all for the best. I have discharged my duty.

"Your sincere friend,

"C. LAMB.

"19th February, 1803, London."

TO MR. MANNING.

"1803.

"Not a sentence, not a syllable of Trismegistus, shall be lost through my neglect. I am his word-banker, his store-keeper of puns and syllogisms. You cannot conceive (and, if Trismegistus cannot, no man can) the strange joy which I felt at the receipt of a letter from Paris. It seemed to give me a learned importance, which placed me above all who had not Parisian correspondents. Believe that I shall carefully husband every scrap, which will save you the trouble of memory, when you come back. You cannot write things so trifling, let them only be about Paris, which I shall not treasure. In particular, I must have parallels of actors and actresses. I must be told if any building in Paris is at all comparable to Saint Paul's, which, contrary to the usual mode of that part of our nature called admiration, I have looked up to with unfading wonder every morning at ten o'clock, ever since

* Captain, afterward Admiral Burney, who became one of the most constant attendants on Lamb's parties, and whose son, Martin, grew up in his strongest regard, and received the honour of the dedication of the second volume of his works.

it has lain in my way to business. At noon I casually glance upon it, being hungry; and hunger has not much taste for the fine arts. Is any night-walk comparable to a walk from St. Paul's to Charing Cross, for lighting, and paving, crowds going and coming without respite, the rattle of coaches, and the cheerfulness of shops? Have you seen a man guillotined yet? Is it as good as hanging? Are the women *all* painted, and the men *all* monkeys? or are there not a *few* that look like *rational* of *both sexes?* Are you and the first consul *thick?* All this expense of ink I may fairly put you to, as your letters will not be solely for my proper pleasure; but are to serve as memoranda and notices, helps for short memory, a kind of Rumfordizing recollection for yourself on your return. Your letter was just what a letter should be, crammed, and very funny. Every part of it pleased me till you came to Paris, and your philosophical indolence or indifference stung me. You cannot stir from your rooms till you know the language! What the devil! are men nothing but word-trumpets? Are men all tongue and ear? Have these creatures, that you and I profess to know *something about*, no faces, gestures, gabble, no folly, no absurdity, no induction of French education upon the abstract idea of men and women, no similitude or dissimilitude to English? Why, thou cursed Smellfungus! your account of your landing and reception, and Bullen (I forget how you spell it, it was spelt my way in Harry the Eighth's time) was exactly in that minute style which strong impressions INSPIRE (writing to a Frenchman, I write as a Frenchman would). It appears to me as if I should die with joy at the first landing in a foreign country. It is the nearest pleasure which a grown man can substitute for that unknown one which he can never know, the pleasure of the first entrance into life from the womb. I dare say, in a short time, my habits would come back like a 'stronger man' armed, and drive out that new pleasure; and I should soon sicken from known objects. Nothing has transpired here that seems to me of sufficient importance to send dry-shod over the water: but I suppose you will want to be told some news. The best and the worst to me is, that I have given up two guineas a week at the 'Post,' and regained my health and spirits, which were upon the wane. I grew sick, and Stuart unsatisfied. *Ludisti satis, tempus abire est:* I must cut closer, that's all. Mister Fell, or, as you, with your usual facetiousness and drollery, call him, Mr. F+ll has stopped short in the middle of his play. Some *friend* has told him that it has not the least merit in it. Oh! that I had the rectifying of the Litany! I would put in a *libera nos* (*Scriptores videlicet*) *ab amicis!* That's all the news.

A propos (is it pedantry, writing to a Frenchman, to express myself sometimes by a French word, when an English one would not do as well? methinks my thoughts fall naturally into it)

* * * * * *

"My dear Manning—Although something of the latest, and after two months' waiting, your letter was highly gratifying. Some parts want a little explication; for example, 'the god-like face of the first consul.' *What god* does he most resemble, Mars, Bacchus, or Apollo? or the god Serapis, who, flying (as Egyptian chronicles deliver) from the fury of the dog Anubis (the hieroglyph of an English mastiff), lighted upon Monomotapa (or the land of apes), by some thought to be Old France, and there set up a tyranny, &c. Our London prints of him represent him gloomy and sulky, like an angry Jupiter. I hear that he is very small, even less than me. I envy you your access to this great man, much more than your séances and conversaziones, which I have a shrewd suspicion must be something dull. What you assert concerning the actors of Paris, that they exceed our comedians, bad as ours are, is *impossible*. In one sense it may be true, that their fine gentlemen, in what is called genteel comedy, may possibly be more brisk and *dégagé* than Mr. Caulfield or Mr. Whitfield, but have any of them the power to move *laughter in excess?* or can a Frenchman *laugh?* Can they batter at your judicious ribs till they *shake*, nothing loath to be so shaken? This is John Bull's criterion, and it shall be mine. You are Frenchified. Both your taste and morals are corrupt and perverted. By-and-by you will come to assert that Bonaparte is as great a general as the old Duke of Cumberland, and deny that one Englishman can beat three Frenchmen. Read Henry the Fifth to restore your orthodoxy. All things continue at a stay-still in London. I cannot repay your new novelties with my stale reminiscences. Like the prodigal, I have spent my patrimony, and feed upon the superannuated chaff and dry husks of repentance; yet sometimes I remember with pleasure the hounds and horses which I kept in the days of my prodigality. I find nothing new, nor any thing that has so much of the gloss and dazzle of novelty as may rebound in narrative, and cast a reflective glimmer across the channel. Did I send you an epitaph I scribbled upon a poor girl who died at nineteen; a good girl, and a pretty girl, and a clever girl, but strangely neglected by all her friends and kin?

'Under this cold marble stone
Sleep the sad remains of one
Who, when alive, by few or none

Was loved, as loved she might have been,
If she prosperous days had seen,
Or had thriving been, I ween.
Only this cold funeral stone
Tells she was beloved by one,
Who on the marble graves his moan.'

"I send you this, being the only piece of poetry I have *done* since the muses all went with T. M. to Paris. I have neither stuff in my brain nor paper in my drawer to write you a longer letter. Liquor, and company, and wicked tobacco, a' nights, have quite dispericraniated me, as one may say; but you, who spiritualize upon Champagne, may continue to write long long letters, and stuff 'em with amusement to the end. Too long they cannot be, any more than a codicil to a will which leaves me sundry parks and manors not specified in the deed. But don't be *two months* before you write again. These from merry old England, on the day of her valiant patron St. George.

"C. LAMB."

CHAPTER VIII.

[1804 to 1806.]

Letters to Manning, Wordsworth, Rickman, and Hazlitt.—"Mr. H." written —accepted—damned.

THERE is no vestige of Lamb's correspondence in the year 1804, nor does he seem to have written for the press. This year, however, added to his list of friends—one in whose conversation he took great delight, until death severed them—William Hazlitt. This remarkable metaphysician and critic had then just completed his first work, the "Essay on the Principles of Human Action," but had not entirely given up his hope of excelling as a painter. After a professional tour through part of England, during which he satisfied his sitters better than himself, he remained some time at the house of his brother, then practising as a portrait painter with considerable success; and while endeavouring to procure a publisher for his work, painted a portrait of Lamb. It is one of the last of Hazlitt's efforts in an art which he afterward illustrated with the most exquisite criticism which the knowledge and love of it could inspire.

Among the vestiges of the early part of 1805 are the three following letters to Manning If the hero of the next letter.

Mr. Richard Hopkins, is living, I trust he will not repine at being ranked with those who

"Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame."

TO MR. MANNING.

"16 Mitre Court Buildings,
"Saturday, 24th Feb., 1805.

'Dear Manning—I have been very unwell since I saw you. A sad depression of spirits, a most unaccountable nervousness, from which I have been partially relieved by an odd accident. You knew Dick Hopkins, the scullion of Caius? This fellow, by industry and agility, has thrust himself into the important situations (no sinecures, believe me) of cook to Trinity Hall and Caius College: and the generous creature has contrived, with the greatest delicacy imaginable, to send me a present of Cambridge brawn. What makes it the more extraordinary is, that the man never saw me in his life that I know of. I suppose he has *heard* of me. I did not immediately recognise the donor; but one of Richard's cards, which had accidentally fallen into the straw, detected him in a moment. Dick, you know, was always remarkable for flourishing. His card imports, that 'orders (to wit, for brawn) from any part of England, Scotland, or Ireland, will be duly executed,' &c. At first I thought of declining the present; but Richard knew my blind side when he pitched upon brawn. 'Tis, of all my hobbies, the supreme in the eating way. He might have sent sops from the pan, skimmings, crumpets, chips, hog's lard, the tender brown judiciously scalped from a fillet of veal (dexterously replaced by a salamander), the tops of asparagus, fugitive livers, runaway gizzards of fowls, the eyes of martyred pigs, tender effusions of laxative woodcocks the red spawn of lobsters, leveret's ears, and such pretty filch ings common to cooks; but these had been ordinary presents, the everyday courtesies of dish-washers to their sweethearts. Brawn was a noble thought. It is not every common gullet-fancier that can properly esteem of it. It is like a picture of one of the old Italian masters. Its gusto is of that hidden sort. As Wordsworth sings of a modest poet, 'you must love him, ere to you he will seem worthy of your love;' so brawn you must taste it ere to you it will have any taste at all. But 'tis nuts to the adept: those that will send out their tongues and feelers to find it out. It will be wooed and, not unsought, be won. Now, ham-essence, lobsters, turtle, such popular minions, absolutely *court you*, lay themselves out to strike you at first smack, like one of David's pictures (they call him *Darveed*), compared with the plain russet-coated

wealth of a Titian or a Corregio, as I illustrated above. Such are the obvious glaring heathen virtues of a corporation dinner, compared with the reserved collegiate worth of a brawn. Do me the favour to leave off the business which you may be at present upon, and go immediately to the kitchens of Trinity and Caius, and make my most respectful compliments to Mr. Richard Hopkins, and assure him that his brawn is most excellent; and that I am, moreover, obliged to him for his innuendo about salt water and bran, which I shall not fail to improve. I leave it to you whether you shall choose to pay him the civility of asking him to dinner while you stay in Cambridge, or in whatever other way you may best like to show your gratitude to *my friend*. Richard Hopkins, considered in many points of view, is a very extraordinary character. Adieu; I hope to see you to supper in London soon, where we will taste Richard's brawn, and drink his health in a cheerful but moderate cup. We have not many such men in any rank of life as Mr. R. Hopkins. Crisp, the barber of St. Mary's, was just such another. I wonder *he* never sent me any little token, some chestnuts, or a puff, or two pounds of hair, just to remember him by. Gifts are like nails. Præsens ut absens, that is, your *present* makes amends for your absence.

"Yours, C. LAMB"

TO MR. MANNING.

"Dear Manning—I sent to Brown's immediately. Mr Brown (or Pijou, as he is called by the moderns) denied the having received a letter from you. The one for you he remembered receiving, and remitting to Leadenhall-street; whither I immediately posted (it being the middle of dinner), my teeth unpicked. There I learned, that if you want a letter set right, you must apply at the first door on the left hand before one o'clock. I returned and picked my teeth. And this morning I made my application in form, and have seen the vagabond letter, which most likely accompanies this. If it does not, I will get Rickman to name it to the speaker, who will not fail to lay the matter before parliament the next sessions, when you may be sure to have all abuses in the post department rectified.

"N.B. There seems to be some informality epidemical. You direct yours to me in Mitre-court; my true address is Mitre-court Buildings. By the pleasantries of Fortune, who likes a joke or a *double entendre* as well as the best of us her children, there happens to be another Mr. Lamb (that there should be two! !) in Mitre-court.

"Farewell, and think upon it. C. L.

"Saturday."

TO MR. MANNING.

"Dear Manning—Certainly you could not have called at all hours from two till ten, for we have been only out of an evening Monday and Tuesday in this week. But, if you think you have, your thought shall go for the deed. We did pray for you on Wednesday night. Oysters unusually luscious; pearls of extraordinary magnitude found in them. I have made bracelets of them; given them in clusters to ladies. Last night we went out in despite, because you were not come at your hour.

"This night we shall be at home, so shall we certainly both Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Take your choice; mind, I don't say of one; but choose which evening you will not, and come the other four. Doors open at five o'clock. Shells forced about nine. Every gentleman smokes or not, as he pleases.

"C. L."

During the last five years, tobacco had been at once Lamb's solace and his bane. In the hope of resisting the temptation of late conviviality to which it ministered, he formed a resolution, the virtue of which can be but dimly guessed, to abandon its use; and imbodied the floating fancies which had attended on his long wavering in one of the richest of his poems, "The Farewell to Tobacco." After many struggles he divorced himself from his genial enemy; and though he afterward renewed acquaintance with milder dalliance, he ultimately abandoned it, and was guiltless of a pipe in his latter years. The following letter, addressed while his sister was laid up with severe and protracted illness, will show his feelings at this time. Its affecting self-upbraidings refer to no greater failings than the social indulgences against which he was manfully struggling.

TO MISS WORDSWORTH.

"Friday, 14th June, 1805.

"My dear Miss Wordsworth—I try to think Mary is recovering, but I cannot always feel it; and, meanwhile, she is lost to me, and I miss a prop. All my strength is gone, and I am like a fool bereft of her co-operation. I dare not think, lest I should think wrong; so used am I to look up to her in the least and the biggest perplexity. To say *all that I find her* would be more than I think anybody could possibly understand; and when I hope to have her well again soon, it would be sinning against her feelings to go about to praise her, for

I can conceal nothing that I do from her. She is older, and wiser, and better than me, and all my wretched imperfections I cover to myself by resolutely thinking on her goodness. She would share life and death with me. She lives but for me. And I know I have been wasting and teazing her life for five years past incessantly with my ways of going on. But even in this upbraiding of myself I am offending against her, for I know that she has cleaved to me for better for worse; and, if the balance has been against her hitherto, it was a noble trade. I am stupid, and lose myself in what I write. I write rather what answers to my feelings (which are sometimes sharp enough) than express my present ones, for I am only flat and stupid.

* * * * * *

"I cannot resist transcribing three or four lines which poor Mary made upon a picture (a Holy Family) which we saw at an auction only one week before she was taken ill. They are sweet lines and upon a sweet picture. But I send them only as the latest memorial of her.

'VIRGIN AND CHILD, L. DA VINCI.

'Maternal lady with thy virgin-grace,
Heaven-born, thy Jesus seemeth sure,
And thou a virgin pure.
Lady most perfect, when thy angel face
Men look upon, they wish to be
A Catholic, Madona fair, to worship thee.

"You had her lines about the 'Lady Blanch.' You have not had some which she wrote upon a copy of a girl from Ti tian, which I had hung up where that print of Blanch and the Abbess (as she beautifully interpreted two female figures from L. da Vinci) had hung in our room. 'Tis light and pretty

'Who art thou, fair one, who usurp'st the place
Of Blanch, the lady of the matchless grace?
Come, fair and pretty, tell to me
Who in thy lifetime thou mightst be?
Thou pretty art and fair,
But with the Lady Blanch thou never must compare.
No need for Blanch her history to tell,
Whoever saw her face they there did read it well;
But when I look on thee, I only know
There lived a pretty maid some hundred years ago.'

"This is a little unfair, to tell so much about ourselves, and to advert so little to your letter, so full of comfortable tidings of you all. But my own cares press pretty close upon me, and you can make allowance. That you may go on gathering strength and peace is the next wish to Mary's recovery.

"I had almost forgot your repeated invitation. Supposing

that Mary will be well and able, there is another *ability* which you may guess at, which I cannot promise myself. In prudence we ought not to come. This illness will make it still more prudential to wait. It is not a balance of this way of spending our money against another way, but an absolute question of whether we shall stop now, or go on wasting away the little we have got beforehand. My best love, however, to you all; and to that most friendly creature, Mrs. Clarkson, and better health to her when you see or write to her.

"CHARLES LAMB."

The "Farewell to Tobacco" was shortly after transmitted to Mr. and Miss Wordsworth with the following:—

TO MR. AND MISS WORDSWORTH.

"I wish you may think this a handsome farewell to my 'Friendly Traitress.' Tobacco has been my evening comfort and my morning curse for these five years; and you know how difficult it is from refraining to pick one's lips even when it has become a habit. This poem is the only one which I have finished since so long as when I wrote 'Hester Savory.' I have had it in my head to do it these two years, but tobacco stood in its own light when it gave me headaches that prevented my singing its praises. Now you have got it, you have got all my store, for I have absolutely not another line. No more has Mary. We have nobody about us that cares for poetry, and who will rear grapes when he shall be the sole eater? Perhaps if you encourage us to show you what we may write, we may do something now and then before we absolutely forget the quantity of an English line for want of practice. The 'Tobacco' being a little in the way of Withers (whom Southey so much likes), perhaps you will somehow convey it to him with my kind remembrances. Then everybody will have seen it that I wish to see it, I having sent it to Malta.

"I remain, dear W. and D., yours truly,

"C. LAMB.

"28th September, 1805."

The following letter to Hazlitt bears date 18th Nov., 1805.

TO MR. HAZLITT.

"Dear Hazlitt—I was very glad to hear from you, and that your journey was so *picturesque*. We miss you, as we foretold we should. One or two things have happened which are beneath the dignity of epistolary communication, but

which, seated about our fireside at night (the winter hands of pork have begun), gesture and emphasis might have talked into some importance. Something about ——'s wife; for instance, how tall she is, and that she visits pranked up like a Queen of the May, with green streamers: a good-natured woman though, which is as much as you can expect from a friend's wife, whom you got acquainted with a bachelor. Some things, too, about Monkey,* which can't so well be written: how it set up for a fine lady, and thought it had got lovers, and was obliged to be convinced of its age from the parish register, where it was proved to be only twelve; and an edict issued that it should not give itself airs yet these four years; and how it got leave to be called Miss, by grace: these, and such like hows, were in my head to tell you, but who can write? Also, how Manning is come to town in spectacles, and studies physic; is melancholy, and seems to have something in his head which he don't impart. Then, how I am going to leave off smoking. Oh la! your Leonardos of Oxford made my mouth water. I was hurried through the gallery, and they escaped me. What do I say? I was a Goth then, and should not have noticed them. I had not settled my notions of beauty; I have now for ever! the small head, the long eye—that sort of peering curve—the wicked Italian mischief; the stick-at-nothing, Herodias' daughter-kind of grace. You understand me? But you disappoint me in passing over in absolute silence the Blenheim Leonardo. Didn't you see it? Excuse a lover's curiosity. I have seen no pictures of note since except at Mr. D——'s gallery. It is curious to see how differently two great men treat the same subject, yet both excellent in their way. For instance, Milton and Mr. D——. Mr. D—— has chosen to illustrate the story of Samson exactly in the point of view in which Milton has been most happy: the interview with the Jewish hero, blind and captive, and Delilah. Milton has imagined his locks grown again, strong as horsehair or porcupine's bristles; doubtless, shaggy and black, as being hairs 'which, of a nation armed, contained the strength.' I don't remember he *says* black; but could Milton imagine them to be yellow? Do you? Mr. D——, with striking originality of conception, has crowned him with a thin yellow wig, in colour precisely like Dyson's; in curl and quantity resembling Mrs. P——'s; his limbs rather stout—about such a man as my brother or Rickman—but no Atlas nor Hercules, nor yet so long as Du bois, the clown of Sadler's Wells. This was judicious, ta

* The daughter of a friend, whom Lamb exceedingly liked from a child and always called by this epithet.

king the spirit of the story rather than the fact; for, doubtless, God could communicate national salvation to the trust of flax and tow as well as hemp and cordage, and could draw down a temple with a golden tress as soon as with all the cables of the British navy.

* * * * * *

'Wasn't you sorry for Lord Nelson? I have followed him in fancy ever since I saw him walking in Pall-Mall (I was prejudiced against him before), looking just as a hero should look; and I have been very much cut about it indeed. He was the only pretence of a great man we had. Nobody is left of any name at all. His secretary died by his side. I imagined him, a Mr. Scott, to be the man you met at Hume's; but I learn from Mrs. Hume that it is not the same. I met Mrs. H. one day, and agreed to go on the Sunday to tea, but the rain prevented us and the distance. I have been to apologize, and we are to dine there the first fine Sunday! Strange perverseness. I never went while you stayed here, and now I go to *find you*. What other news is there, Mary? What puns have I made in the last fortnight? You never remember them. You have no relish of the comic. 'Oh! tell Hazlitt not to forget to send me the American Farmer. I dare say it is not so good as he fancies; but a book's a book.' I have not heard from Wordsworth or from Malta since. Charles Kemble, it seems, enters into possession to-morrow. We sup at 109 Russell-street this evening. I wish your friend would not drink. It's a blemish in the greatest characters. You send me a modern quotation poetical. How do you like this in an old play? Vittoria Corombona, a spunky Italian lady, a Leonardo one, nicknamed the White Devil, being on her trial for murder, &c., and questioned about seducing a duke from his wife and the state, makes answer:—

> 'Condemn you me for that the duke did love me?
> So may you blame some fair and crystal river,
> For that some melancholic distracted man
> Hath drown'd himself in it.'

"N.B. I shall expect a line from you, if but a bare line, whenever you write to Russell-street, and a letter often when you do not. I pay no postage. But I will have consideration for you until parliament time and franks. Luck to Ned Search and the new art of colouring. Monkey sends her love, and Mary specially.

"Yours truly,

"C. LAMB."

Lamb introduced Hazlitt to Godwin; and we find him early in the following year thus writing respecting the offer of Hazlitt's work to Johnson, and his literary pursuits.

TO MR. HAZLITT.

"Thursday, 15th Jan., 1806.

"Dear Hazlitt—Godwin went to Johnson's yesterday about your business. Johnson would not come down, or give any answer, but has promised to open the manuscript, and to give you an answer in one month. Godwin will punctually go again (Wednesday is Johnson's open day) yesterday four weeks next: *i. e.*, in one lunar month from this time. Till when, Johnson positively declines giving any answer. I wish you joy on ending your Search. Mrs. H. was naming something about a 'Life of Fawcett,' to be by you undertaken: the great Fawcett, as she explained to Manning when he asked '*what Fawcett?*' He innocently thought *Fawcett the player.* But Fawcett the divine is known to many people, albeit unknown to the Chinese inquirer. I should think, if you liked it, and Johnson declined it, Phillips is the man. He is perpetually bringing out biographies, Richardson, Wilks, Foot, Lee Lewis, without number: little trim things in two easy volumes, price 12*s.* the two, made up of letters to and from, scraps, posthumous trifles, anecdotes, and about forty pages of hard biography; you might dish up a Fawcettiad in three months, and ask 60*l.* or 80*l.* for it. I dare say that Phillips would catch at it. I wrote you the other day in a great hurry. Did you get it? This is merely a letter of business at Godwin's request. Lord Nelson is quiet at last. His ghost only keeps a slight fluttering in odes and elegies in newspapers, and impromptus, which could not be got ready before the funeral.

"As for news, —— is coming to town on Monday (if no kind angel intervene) to surrender himself to prison. He hopes to get the rules of the Fleet. On the same or nearly the same day, F——, my other quondam co-friend and drinker, will go to Newgate, and his wife and four children, I suppose, to the parish. Plenty of reflection and motives of gratitude to the wise Disposer of all things in us, whose prudent conduct has hitherto ensured us a warm fire and snug roof over our heads. *Nullum numen abest si sit Prudentia.* Alas! Prudentia is in the last quarter of her tutelary shining over me. A little time and I—but maybe I may, at last, hit upon some mode of collecting some of the vast superfluities of this money-voiding town. Much is to be got, and I do not want much. All I ask is time and leisure; and I am cruelly

off for them. When you have the inclination I shall be very glad to have a letter from you. Your brother and Mrs. H., I am afraid, think hardly of us for not coming oftener to see them, but we are distracted beyond what they can conceive with visiters and visitings. I never have an hour for my head to work quietly its own workings; which, you know, is as necessary to the human system as sleep. Sleep, too, I can't get for these winds of a night: and without sleep and rest what should ensue?

"Yours, dear H.,

"C. LAMB."

TO MR. HAZLITT.

"Dear H.—Godwin has just been here in his way from Johnson's. Johnson has had a fire in his house; this happened about five weeks ago; it was in the daytime, so it did not burn the house down, but it did so much damage that the house must come down to be repaired. His nephew that we met on Hampstead Hill put it out. Well, this fire has put him so back, that he craves one more month before he gives you an answer. I will certainly goad Godwin (if necessary) to go again this very day four weeks; but I am confident he will want no goading. Three or four most capital auctions of pictures advertised; in May, *Wellbore Ellis Agar's*, the first private collection in England, so Holcroft says. In March, Sir George Young's, in Stratford-place (where Cosway lives), and a Mr. Hulse's at Blackheath, both very capital collections, and have been announced for some months. Also the Marquis of Lansdown's pictures in March; and, though inferior to mention, lastly, the Dulwich Gallery. Don't your mouth water to be here? T'other night Loftus called, whom we have not seen since you went before. We meditate a stroll next Wednesday, fast day. He happened to light upon Mr. Holcroft, wife, and daughter, their first visit at our house. Your brother called last night. We keep up our intimacy. He is going to begin a large Madona and child from Mrs. H. and baby. I fear he goes astray after *ignes fatui*. He is a clever man. By-the-by, I saw a miniature of his as far excelling any in his show cupboard (that of your sister not excepted) as that show cupboard excels the show things you see in windows, an old woman—hang her name—but most superlative; he has it to clean—I'll ask him the name—but the best miniature I ever saw. But for oil pictures!—what has he to do with Madonas?—if the Virgin Mary were alive and visitable, he would not hazard himself in a Covent-Garden-pit-crowd to see her. It an't his style of beauty, is it? But he will go on painting

things he ought not to paint, and not painting things he ought to paint. Manning not gone to China, but talks of going this spring. God forbid. Coleridge not heard of. I am going to leave off smoke. In the mean time, I am so smoky with last night's ten pipes, that I must leave off. Mary begs her kind remembrances. Pray write to us. This is no letter, but I supposed you grew anxious about Johnson.

"N.B. Have taken a room at three shillings a week, to be in between five and eight at night, to avoid my *nocturnal* alias *knock-eternal* visiters. The first fruits of my retirement has been a farce which to manager to-morrow. *Wish my ticket luck.* God bless you, and do write.

"Yours, *fumosissimus*,
"C. LAMB.

"Wednesday, 19th Feb., 1806."

The farce referred to in the foregoing letter is the delightful *jeu-d'esprit*, "MR. H.," destined to only one night's stage existence, but to become "a good jest for ever." It must be confessed that it has not substance enough for a dramatic piece in two acts; a piece which must present a show of real interest, involve its pair of young lovers in actual perplexities, and terminate in the seriousness of marriage! It would be rare sport in Milton's "Limbo of Vanity," but is too airy for the ponderous sentimentalism of the modern school of farce. As Swift, in "Gulliver," brings everything to the standard of size, so in this farce everything is reduced to an alphabetical standard. Humour is sent to school to learn its letters; or, rather, letters are made instinct with the most delicate humour. It is the apotheosis of the alphabet, and teaches the value of a good name without the least hint of moral purposes. This mere pleasantry; this refining on sounds and letters; this verbal banter, and watery collision of the pale reflexions of words, could not succeed on a stage which had begun to require interest, moral or immoral, to be interwoven with the web of all its actions; which no longer rejoiced in the riot of animal spirits and careless gayety; which no longer permitted wit to take the sting from evil, as well as the load from care; but infected even its prince of rakes, Charles Surface, with a cant of sentiment which makes us turn for relief to the more honest hypocrite his brother. MR. H. "could never *do*;" but its composition was pleasant, and its acceptance gave Lamb some of the happiest moments he ever spent. Thus he announces it to Wordsworth, in reply to a letter communicating to him that the poet was a father.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Dear Wordsworth—We are pleased, you may be sure, with the good news of Mrs. W——. Hope all is well over by this time. 'A fine boy!—have you any more?—one more and a girl—poor copies of me!' *vide* MR. H., a farce which the proprietors have done me the honour; but I will set down Mr. Wroughton's own words. N. B. The ensuing letter was sent in answer to one which I wrote, begging to know if my piece had any chance, as I might make alterations, &c. I, writing on the Monday, there comes this letter on the Wednesday. Attend!

[Copy of a Letter from Mr. R. Wroughton.]

'Sir—Your piece of MR. H., I am desired to say, is accepted at Drury Lane Theatre by the proprietors, and, if agreeable to you, will be brought forward when the proper opportunity serves. The piece shall be sent to you for your alterations in the course of a few days, as the same is not in my hands, but with the proprietors.

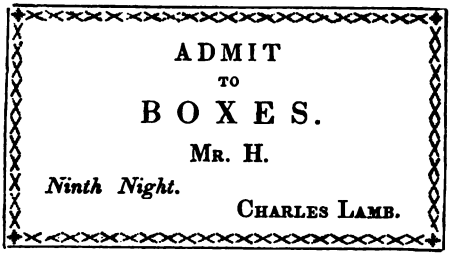
'I am, sir, your obedient servant,

'RICHARD WROUGHTON.

[Dated]
'66 Gower-street,
'Wednesday, June 11, 1806.'

"On the following Sunday Mr. T. comes. The scent of a manager's letter brought him. He would have gone farther any day on such a business. I read the letter to him. He deems it authentic and peremptory. Our conversation naturally fell upon pieces, different sorts of pieces; what is the best way of offering a piece, how far the caprice of managers is an obstacle in the way of a piece, how to judge of the merits of a piece, how long a piece may remain in the hands of the managers before it is acted; and my piece, and your piece, and my poor brother's piece—my poor brother was all his life endeavouring to get a piece accepted.

"I wrote that in mere wantonness of triumph. Have nothing more to say about it. The managers, I thank my stars, have decided its merits for ever. They are the best judges of pieces, and it would be insensible in me to affect a false modesty after the very flattering letter which I have received.



"I think this will be as good a pattern for orders as I can think on. A little thin flowery border, round, neat, not gaudy, and the Drury Lane Apollo, with the harp at the top. Or shall I have no Apollo?—simply nothing? Or perhaps the comic muse?

"The same form, only I think without the Apollo, will serve for the pit and galleries. I think it will be best to write my name at full length; but, then, if I give away a great many, that will be tedious. Perhaps *Ch. Lamb* will do.

"BOXES, now I think on it, I'll have in capitals. The rest in a neat Italian hand. Or better, perhaps, Boxes in old English characters, like Madoc or Thalaba?

* * * * * *

"*Apropos* of Spenser (you will find him mentioned a page or two before, near enough for an *àpropos*), I was discoursing on poetry (as one's apt to deceive one's self, and, when a person is willing to *talk* of what one likes, to believe that he also likes the same, as lovers do) with a young gentleman of my office, who is deep read in Anacreon Moore, Lord Strangford, and the principal modern poets, and I happened to mention Epithalamiums, and that I could show him a very fine one of Spenser's. At the mention of this my gentleman, who is a very fine gentleman, pricked up his ears, and expressed great pleasure, and begged that I would give him leave to copy it: he did not care how long it was (for I objected the length), he should be very happy to see *anything by him.* Then pausing and looking sad, he ejaculated 'POOR SPENCER!' I begged to know the reason of this ejaculation, thinking that time had by this time softened down any calamities which the bard might have endured. 'Why, poor fellow!' said he, 'he has lost his wife!' 'Lost his wife!' said I, 'who are you talking of?' 'Why, Spencer!' said he; 'I've read the "Monody" he wrote on the occasion, and *a very pretty thing it is.*' This led to an explanation (it could be delayed no longer), that the

sound Spenser, which, when poetry is talked of, generally excites an image of an old bard in a ruff, and sometimes with it dim notions of Sir P. Sidney, and perhaps Lord Burleigh, had raised in my gentleman a quite contrary image of the Honourable William Spencer, who has translated some things from the German very prettily, which are published with Lady Di. Beauclerk's designs. Nothing like defining of terms when we talk. What blunders might I have fallen into of quite inapplicable criticism but for this timely explanation.

"N.B. At the beginning of *Edm.* Spenser (to prevent mistakes), I have copied from my own copy, and primarily from a book of Chalmers's on Shakspeare, a sonnet of Spenser's never printed among his poems. It is curious as being manly and rather Miltonic, and as a sonnet of Spenser's with nothing in it about love or knighthood. I have no room for remembrances; but I hope our doing your commission will prove we do not quite forget you. C. L."

The interval between the completion of the farce "and its first acting," though full of bright hopes of dramatic success, was not all a phantasm. The following two letters to Mr. Rickman, now one of the Clerks of the House of Commons, show Lamb's unwearied kindness.

TO MR. RICKMAN.

"Dear Rickman—You do not happen to have any place at your disposal which would suit a decayed man of letters? I do not much expect that you have, or that you will go much out of your way to serve the object, when you hear it is F. But the case is, by a *mistaking* of his *turn*, as they call it, he is reduced, I am afraid, to extremities, and would be extremely glad of a place in an office. Now, it does sometimes happen, that just as a man wants a place, a place wants him; and though this is a lottery to which none but G. B. would choose to trust his all, there is no harm just to call in at Despair's office for a friend, and see if *his* number is come up (B.'s further case I enclose by way of episode). Now, if you should happen, or anybody you know, to want a *hand*, here is a young man of solid but not brilliant genius, who would turn his hand to the making out dockets, penning a manifesto, or scoring a tally, not the worse (I hope) for knowing Latin and Greek, and having in youth conversed with the philosophers. But from these follies I believe he is thoroughly awakened, and would bind himself by a terrible oath never to imagine himself an extraordinary genius again.

"Yours, &c.

"C. Lamb."

TO MR. RICKMAN.

"Dear Rickman—I send you some papers about a salt-water soap, for which the inventor is desirous of getting a parliamentary reward, like Dr. Jenner. Whether such a prospect be feasible, I mainly doubt, taking for granted the equal utility. I should suppose the usual way of paying such projectors is by way of patents and contracts. The patent, you see, he has got. A contract he is about with the navy board. Meantime, the projector is hungry. Will you answer me two questions, and return them with the papers as soon as you can? Imprimis, is there any chance of success in application to parliament for a reward? Did you ever hear of the invention? You see its benefits and saving to the nation (always the first motive with a true projector) are feelingly set forth: the last paragraph but one of the estimate, in enumerating the shifts poor seamen are put to, even approaches the pathetic. But, agreeing to all he says, is there the remotest chance of parliament giving the projector anything; and *when* should application be made, now or after a report (if he can get it) from the navy board? Secondly, let the infeasibility be as great as you will, you will oblige me by telling me the way of introducing such an application in parliament, without buying over a majority of members, which is totally out of projector's power. I vouch nothing for the soap myself; for I always wash in *fresh water*, and find it answer tolerably well for all purposes of cleanliness; nor do I know the projector; but a relation of mine has put me on writing to you, for whose parliamentary knowledge he has great veneration.

"P.S. The Captain and Mrs. Burney and Phillips take their chance at cribbage here on Wednesday. Will you and Mrs. R. join the party? Mary desires her compliments to Mrs. R., and joins in the invitation.

"Yours truly,

"C. LAMB.

"Monday."

Before the production of "MR. H.," Lamb was obliged, in sad earnest, to part from Manning, who, after talking and thinking about China for years, took the heroic resolution of going thither, not to acquire wealth or fame, but to realize the phantom of his restless thought. Happy was he to have a friend like Mr. Burney, to indulge and soften his grief, which he thus expresses in his first letter to his friend.

TO MR. MANNING.

"My dear Manning—I didn't know what your going was till I shook a last fist with you, and then 'twas just like having shaken hands with a wretch on the fatal scaffold; and, when you are down the ladder, you can never stretch out to him again. Mary says you are dead, and there's nothing to do but to leave it to time to do for us in the end what it always does for those who mourn for people in such a case. But she'll see by your letter you are not quite dead. A little kicking and agony, and then—. Martin Burney *took me out* a walking that evening, and we talked of Manning; and then I came home and smoked for you, and at twelve o'clock came home Mary and Monkey Louisy from the play, and there was more talk and more smoking, and they all seemed first-rate characters, because they knew a certain person. But what's the use of talking about 'em? By the time you'll have made your escape from the Kalmuks, you'll have stayed so long I shall never be able to bring to your mind who Mary was, who will have died about a year before, nor who the Holcrofts were! Me perhaps you will mistake for Phillips, or confound me with Mr. Dawe, because you saw us together. Mary (whom you seem to remember yet) is not quite easy that she had not a formal parting from you. I wish it had so happened. But you must bring her a token, a shawl or something, and remember a sprightly little mandarin for our mantelpiece, as a companion to the child I am going to purchase at the museum. She says you saw her writings about the other day, and she wishes you should know what they are. She is doing for Godwin's bookseller twenty of Shakspeare's plays, to be made into children's tales. Six are already done by her, to wit, 'The Tempest,' 'Winter's Tale,' 'Midsummer Night,' 'Much Ado,' 'Two Gentlemen of Verona,' and 'Cymbeline;' and the 'Merchant of Venice' is in forwardness. I have done 'Othello' and 'Macbeth,' and mean to do all the tragedies. I think it will be popular among the little people, besides money. It's to bring in sixty guineas. Mary has done them capitally, I think you'd think. These are the humble amusements we propose while you are gone to plant the cross of Christ among barbarous pagan anthropophagi. Quam homo homini præstat! but then, perhaps, you'll get murdered, and we shall die in our beds with a fair literary reputation. Be sure, if you see any of those people whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders, that you make a draught of them. It will be very curious. Oh! Manning, I am serious to sinking, almost, when I think that all those

evenings, which you have made so pleasant, are gone perhaps for ever. Four years you talk of may be ten, and you may come back and find such alterations! Some circumstances may grow up to you or to me that may be a bar to the return of any such intimacy. I dare say all this is hum! and that all will come back; but, indeed, we die many deaths before we die, and I am almost sick when I think that such a hold as I had of you is gone. I have friends, but some of 'em are changed. Marriage, or some circumstance, rises up to make them not the same. But I felt sure of you. And that last token you gave me of expressing a wish to have my name joined with yours, you know not how it affected me: like a legacy.

"God bless you in every way you can form a wish. May he give you health, and safety, and the accomplishment of all your objects, and return you again to us, to gladden some fireside or other (I suppose we shall be moved from the Temple). I will nurse the remembrance of your steadiness and quiet, which used to infuse something like itself into our nervous minds. Mary called you our ventilator. Farewell, and take her best wishes and mine.

"Good-by,
"C. L."

Christmas approached, and Lamb then conveyed to Manning, now at the antipodes, news of poor Holcroft's failure in his play of "The Vindictive Man," and his own approaching trial.

TO MR. MANNING.

"5th December, 1806.

"Manning, your letter dated Hottentots, August the what-was-it? came to hand. I can scarce hope that mine will have the same luck. China—Canton—bless us—how it strains the imagination and makes it ache! I write under another uncertainty whether it can go to-morrow by a ship which I have just learned is going off direct to your part of the world, or whether the despatches may not be sealed up, and this have to wait; for, if it is detained here, it will grow staler in a fortnight than in a five months' voyage coming to you. It will be a point of conscience to send you none but bran new news (the latest edition), which will but grow the better, like oranges for a sea voyage. Oh that you should be so many hemispheres off—if I speak incorrectly you can correct me—why the simplest death or marriage that takes place here must be important to you as news in the old Bastille. There's your

friend Tuthill has got away from France—you remember France? and Tuthill? ten to one but he writes by this post, if he don't get my note in time, apprizing him of the vessel sailing. Know, then, that he has found means to obtain leave from Bonaparte, without making use of any *incredible romantic pretences*, as some have done who never meant to fulfil them, to come home, and I have seen him here and at Holcroft's. An't you glad about Tuthill? Now, then, be sorry for Holcroft, whose new play, called 'The Vindictive Man,' was damned about a fortnight since. It died in part of its own weakness, and in part with being choked up with bad actors. The two principal parts were destined to Mrs. Jordan and Mr. Bannister, but Mrs. J. has not come to terms with the managers; they have had some squabble, and Bannister shot some of his fingers off by thegoing off of a gun. So Miss Duncan had her part, and Mr. De Camp took his. His part, the principal comic hope of the play, was most unluckily Goldfinch taken out of the 'Road to Ruin,' not only the same character, but the identical Goldfinch—the same as Falstaff is in two plays of Shakspeare—as the devil of ill-luck would have it, half the audience did not know that H. had written it, but were displeased at his stealing from the 'Road to Ruin;' and those who might have borne a gentlemanly coxcomb with his 'That's your sort,' 'Go it,' such as Lewis is, did not relish the intolerable vulgarity and inanity of the idea stripped of his manner. De Camp was hooted more than hissed, hooted and bellowed off the stage before the second act was finished, so that the remainder of his part was forced to be, with some violence to the play, omitted. In addition to this, a woman of the town was another principal character—a most unfortunate choice in this moral day. The audience were as scandalized as if you were to introduce such a personage to their private tea-tables. Besides, her action in the play was gross—wheedling an old man into marriage. But the mortal blunder of the play was that which, oddly enough, H. took pride in, and exultingly told me of the night before it came out, that there were no less than eleven principal characters in it, and I believe he meant of the men only, for the playbill expressed as much, not reckoning one woman—and true it was, for Mr. Powell, Mr. Raymond, Mr. Bartlett, Mr. H. Siddons, Mr. Barrymore, &c., &c., to the number of eleven, had all parts equally prominent, and there were as much of them in quantity and rank as of the hero and heroine—and most of them gentlemen who seldom appear but as the hero's friend in a farce, for a minute or two, and here they all had their ten minute speeches, and one of them gave the audience a serious

account how he was now a lawyer, but had been a poet, and then a long enumeration of the inconveniences of authorship, rascally booksellers, reviewers, &c., which first set the audience a gaping; but I have said enough. You will be so sorry, that you will not think the best of me for my detail; but news is news at Canton. Poor H., I fear, will feel the disappointment very seriously in a pecuniary light. What if he should be obliged to part with his long-necked Guido that hangs opposite as you enter, and the game-piece that hangs in the back drawing-room, and all those Vandycks, &c.? God should temper the wind to the shorn connoisseur. I hope I need not say to you that I feel for the weather-beaten author, and for all his household. I assure you his fate has soured a good deal the pleasure I should have otherwise taken in my own little farce being accepted, and, I hope, about to be acted —it is in rehearsal, actually, and I expect it to come out next week. It is kept a sort of secret, and the rehearsals have gone on privately, lest, by many folks knowing it, the story should come out, which would infallibly damn it. You remember I had it sent before you went. Wroughton read it, and was much pleased with it. I speedily got an answer. I took it to make alterations, and lazily kept it some months; then took courage, and furbished it up in a day or two, and took it. In less than a fortnight I heard the principal part was given to Elliston, who liked it, and only wanted a prologue, which I have since done and sent it; and I had a note the day before yesterday from the manager, Wroughton (bless his fat face—he is not a bad actor in some things), to say that I should be summoned to the rehearsal after the next, which next was to be yesterday. I had no idea it was so forward. I have had no trouble, attended no reading or rehearsal, made no interest; what a contrast to the usual parade of authors! But it is peculiar to modesty to do all things without noise or pomp! I have some suspicion it will appear in public on Wednesday next; for W. says in his note, it is so forward that, if wanted, it may come out next week, and a new melodrame is announced for every day till then; and a 'new farce is in rehearsal,' is put up in the bills. Now you'd like to know the subject. The title is 'Mr. H.,' no more; how simple, how taking! A great H sprawling over the playbill, and attracting eyes at every corner. The story is a coxcomb appearing at Bath, vastly rich—all the ladies dying for him—all bursting to know who he is—but he goes by no other name than Mr. H.; a curiosity like that of the dames of Strasburg about the man with the great nose. But I won't tell you any more about it. Yes I will; but I can't give you an idea how

I have done it. I'll just tell you that, after much vehement admiration, when his true name comes out, 'Hogsflesh,' all the women shun him, avoid him, and not one can be found to change their name for him—that's the idea—how flat it is here—but how whimsical in the farce! And only think how hard upon me it is that the ship is despatched to-morrow, and my triumph cannot be ascertained till the Wednesday after—but all China will ring of it by-and-by. N.B. (But this is a secret) The professor has got a tragedy coming out with the young Roscius in it, in January next, as we say, January last it will be with you—and though it is a profound secret now, as all his affairs are, it cannot be much of one by the time you read this. However, don't let it go any further. I understand there are dramatic exhibitions in China. One would not like to be forestalled. Do you find in all this stuff I have written anything like those feelings which one should send my old adventuring friend, that is gone to wander among Tartars, and may never come again? I don't—but your going away, and all about you is a threadbare topic. I have worn it out with thinking—it has come to me when I have been dull with anything, till my sadness has seemed more to have come from it than to have introduced it. I want you, you don't know how much—but, if I had you here in my European garret, we should talk over such stuff as I have written—so—those 'Tales from Shakspeare' are coming out, and Mary has begun a new work. Mr. Dawe is turned author, he has been in such a way lately—Dawe the painter, I mean—he sits and stands about at Holcroft's, and says nothing—then sighs, and leans his head on his hand. I took him to be in love—but it seems he was only meditating a work—'The life of Morland,' the young man is not used to composition. Rickman and Captain Burney are well; they assemble at my house pretty regularly of a Wednesday—a new institution. Like other great men, I have a public day, cribbage and pies, with Phillips and noisy ——.

"Good Heaven! what a bit only I've got left! how shall I squeeze all I know into this morsel! Coleridge is come home, and is going to turn lecturer on taste at the Royal Institution. I shall get £200 from the theatre if Mr. H. has a good run, and I hope £100 for the copyright. Nothing if it fails, and there never was a more ticklish thing. The whole depends on the manner in which the name is brought out, which I value myself on, as a *chef-d'œuvre*. How the paper grows less and less! In less than two minutes I shall cease to talk to you, and you may rave to the great Wall of China. N.B. Is there such a wall? Is it as big as Old London

Wall, by Bedlam? Have you met with a friend of mine, named Ball, at Canton? if you are acquainted, remember me kindly to him. N.B. If my little thing don't succeed, I shall easily survive, having, as it were, compared to H.'s venture, but a sixteenth in the lottery. Mary and I are to sit next the orchestra in the pit, next the dweedle-dees. She remembers you. You are more to us than five hundred farces, clappings, &c.

"Come back one day.

"C. LAMB."

Wednesday, 10th December, 1806, was the wished-for evening which decided the fate of "MR. H." on the boards of Drury. Great curiosity was excited by the announcement; the house was crowded to the ceiling; and the audience impatiently awaited the conclusion of the long, dull, intolerable opera of "The Travellers," by which it was preceded. At length Mr. Elliston, the hero of the farce, entered, gayly dressed, and in happiest spirits—enough, not too much, elated —and delivered the prologue with great vivacity and success. The farce began; at first it was much applauded; but the wit seemed wiredrawn; and when the curtain fell on the first act, the friends of the author began to fear. The second act dragged heavily on, as second acts of farces will do; a rout at Bath, peopled with ill-dressed and over-dressed actors and actresses, increased the disposition to yawn; and when the moment of disclosure came, and nothing worse than the name *Hogsflesh* was heard, the audience resented the long play on their curiosity, and would hear no more. Lamb, with his sister, sat, as he anticipated, in the front of the pit; and having joined in encoring the epilogue, the brilliancy of which injured the farce, he gave way with equal pliancy to the common feeling, and hissed and hooted as loudly as any of his neighbours. The next morning's playbill contained a veracious announcement, that "*the new farce of* MR. H., *performed for the first time last night, was received by an overflowing audience with universal applause, and will be repeated for the second time to-morrow;*" but the stage lamps never that morrow saw! Elliston would have tried it again; but Lamb saw at once that the case was hopeless, and consoled his friends with a century of puns for the wreck of his dramatic hopes.

CHAPTER IX.

[1807 to 1814.]

Letters to Manning, Montague, Wordsworth, and Coleridge.

FROM this period, the letters of Lamb which have been preserved are comparatively few, with reference to the years through which they are scattered. He began to write in earnest for the press, and the time thus occupied was withdrawn from his correspondents, while his thoughts and feelings were developed by a different excitement, and expressed in other forms. In the year 1807 the series of stories founded on the plays of Shakspeare, referred to in his last letter to Manning, was published; in which the outlines of his plots are happily brought within the apprehension of children, and his language preserved wherever it was possible to retain it; a fit counter poise to these works addressed to the young understanding, to which Lamb still cherished the strong distaste which broke out in one of his previous letters. Of these tales, King Lear, Macbeth, Timon of Athens, Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, and Othello, are by Charles, and the others by Mary Lamb; hers being, as Lamb always insisted, the most felicitous, but all well adapted to infuse some sense of the nobleness of the poet's thoughts into the hearts of their little readers. Of two other works preparing for the press, he thus speaks in a letter, which bears date 26th February, 1808, addressed to Manning, at Canton, in reply to a letter received thence, in which Manning informed Lamb that he had consigned a parcel of silk to a Mr. Knox for him.

TO MR. MANNING.

"Dear Missionary—Your letters from the farthest ends of the world have arrived safe. Mary is very thankful for your remembrance of her; and, with the less suspicion of mercenariness, as the silk, the *symbolum materiale* of your friendship, has not yet appeared. I think Horace says somewhere, *nox longa*. I would not impute negligence or unhandsome delays to a person whom you have honoured with your confidence, but I have not heard of the silk or of Mr. Knox save by your letter. Maybe he expects the first advances! or, it may be, that he has not succeeded in getting the article on

shore, for it is among the *res prohibitæ et non nisi smuggleationis viâ fruendæ*. But so it is, in the friendships between *wicked men*, the very expressions of their good-will cannot but be sinful. I suppose you know my farce was damned. The noise still rings in my ears. Was you ever in the pillory? being damned is something like that. A treaty of marriage is on foot between William Hazlitt and Miss Stoddart. Something about settlements only retards it. Little Fenwick (you don't see the connexion of ideas here, how the devil should you ?) is in the rules of the Fleet. Cruel creditors! operation of iniquitous laws! is Magna Charta, then, a mockery? Why, in general (here I suppose you to ask a question), my spirits are pretty good, but I have my depressions, black as a smith's beard, Vulcanic, Stygian. At such times I have recourse to a pipe, which is like not being at home to a dun; he comes again with tenfold bitterness the next day. (Mind, I am not in debt, I only borrow a similitude from others; it shows imagination.) I have done two books since the failure of my farce; they will both be out this summer. The one is a juvenile book, 'The Adventures of Ulysses,' intended to be an introduction to the reading of Telemachus! it is done out of the Odyssey, not from the Greek. I would not mislead you; nor yet from Pope's Odyssey, but from an older translation of one Chapman. The 'Shakspeare Tales' suggested the doing it. Godwin is, in both those cases, my bookseller. The other is done for Longman, and is 'Specimens of English Dramatic Poets contemporary with Shakspeare.' Specimens are becoming fashionable. We have 'Specimens of Ancient English Poets'—'Specimens of Modern English Poets'—'Specimens of Ancient English Prose Writers,' without end. They used to be called 'Beauties.' You have seen 'Beauties of Shakspeare?' so have many people that never saw any beauties in Shakspeare. Longman is to print it, and be at all the expense and risk, and I am to share the profits after all deductions, *i. e.*, a year or two hence I must pocket what they please to tell me is due to me. But the book is such as I am glad there should be. It is done out of old plays at the Museum, and out of Dodsley's collection, &c. It is to have notes. So I go creeping on since I was lamed with that cursed fall from off the top of Drury Lane Theatre into the pit, something more than a year ago. However, I have been free of the house ever since, and the house was pretty free with me upon that occasion. Hang 'em, how they hissed! it was not a hiss neither, but a sort of a frantic yell, like a congregation of mad geese, with roaring sometimes like bears, mows and mops like apes, sometimes snakes, that hissed me into mad-

ness. 'Twas like St. Anthony's temptations. Mercy on us, that God should give his favourite children, men, mouths to speak with, to discourse rationally, to promise smoothly, to flatter agreeably, to encourage warmly, to counsel wisely, to sing with, to drink with, and to kiss with, and that they should turn them into mouths of adders, bears, wolves, hyenas, and whistle like tempests, and emit breath through them like distillations of aspic poison, to asperse and vilify the innocent labours of their fellow-creatures who are desirous to please them! Heaven be pleased to make the teeth rot out of them all, therefore! Make them a reproach, and all that pass by them to loll out their tongue at them! Blind mouths! as Milton somewhere calls them. Do you like Braham's singing? The little Jew has bewitched me. I follow him like as the boys followed Tom the Piper. I was insensible to music till he gave me a new sense. Oh that you could go to the new opera of Kais to-night! 'Tis all about Eastern manners; it would just suit you. It describes the wild Arabs, wandering Egyptians, lying dervises, and all that sort of people, to a hair. You needn't ha' gone so far to see what you see, if you saw it as I do every night at Drury Lane Theatre. Braham's singing, when it is impassioned, is finer than Mrs. Siddon's, or Mr. Kemble's acting; and when it is not impassioned, it is as good as hearing a person of fine sense talking. The brave little Jew! I made a pun the other day, and palmed it upon Holcroft, who grinned like a Cheshire cat. (Why do cats grin in Cheshire? Because it was once a county palatine, and the cats cannot help laughing whenever they think of it, though I see no great joke in it.) I said that Holcroft said, being asked who were the best dramatic writers of the day, 'Hook and I.' Mr. Hook is author of several pieces, Tekeli, &c. You know what *hooks and eyes* are, don't you? Your letter had many things in it hard to be understood; the puns were ready and Swift-like; but don't you begin to be melancholy in the midst of Eastern customs! 'The mind does not easily conform to foreign usages, even in trifles: it requires something that it has been familiar with.' That begins one of Dr. Hawkesworth's papers in the Adventurer, and is, I think, as sensible a remark as ever fell from the doctor's mouth. White is at Christ's Hospital, a wit of the first magnitude, but had rather be thought a gentleman, like Congreve. You know Congreve's repulse, which he gave to Voltaire when he came to visit him as a *literary man*, that he wished to be considered only in the light of a private gentleman. I think the impertinent Frenchman was properly answered. I should just serve any member of the French

Institute in he same manner that wished to be introduced to me.

* * * * * *

"Does any one read at Canton? Lord Moira is president of the Westminster Library. I suppose you might have interest with Sir Joseph Banks to get to be president of any similar institution that should be set up at Canton. I think public reading-rooms the best mode of educating young men. Solitary reading is apt to give the headache. Besides, who knows that you *do* read? There are ten thousand institutions similar to the Royal Institution which have sprung up from it. There is the London Institution, the Southwark Institution, the Russell Square Rooms Institution, &c.—*College quasi Conlege*, a place where people read together. Wordsworth, the great poet, is coming to town; he is to have apartments in the Mansion House. Well, my dear Manning, talking cannot be infinite; I have said all I have to say; the rest is but remembrances, which we shall bear in our heads of you while we have heads. Here is a packet of trifles nothing worth; but it is a trifling part of the world where I live; emptiness abounds. But in fulness of affection we remain yours, C. L."

The two books referred to in this letter were shortly after published. "The Adventures of Ulysses" had some tinge of the quaintness of Chapman; it gives the plot of the earliest and one of the most charming of romances, without spoiling its interest. The "Specimens of English Dramatic Poets who lived about the Time of Shakspeare" were received with more favour than Lamb's previous works, though it was only by slow and imperceptible degrees that they won their way to the apprehensions of the most influential minds, and wrought out the genial purpose of the editor in renewing a taste for the great contemporaries of Shakspeare. "The Monthly Review" vouchsafed a notice* in its large print, upon the whole favourable, according to the existing fashion of criticism, but still "craftily qualified." It will scarcely be credited, without reference to the article itself, that on the notes the critic pronounces this judgment: "The notes before us indeed have nothing very remarkable, except the style, which is formally abrupt and elaborately quaint. Some of the most studied attempts to display excessive feeling we had noted for animadversion, but the task is unnecessary," &c.

It is easy to conceive of readers strongly dissenting from

* April, 1809.

some of the passionate eulogies of these notes, and even taking offence at the boldness of the allusions; but that any one should read these essences of criticism, suggesting the profoundest thoughts, and replete throughout with fine imagery, and find in them "nothing remarkable," is a mystery which puzzles us. But when the same critic speaks of the heroine of the "Broken Heart" as "the light-heeled Calantha," it is easy to appreciate his fitness for sitting in judgment on the old English drama and the congenial expositor of its grandeurs!

In this year Miss Lamb published her charming work, entitled "Mrs. Leicester's School," to which Lamb contributed three of the tales. The best, however, are his sister's, as he delighted to insist; and no tales more happily adapted to nurture all sweet and childlike feelings in children were ever written. Another joint publication, "Poetry for Children," followed, which also is worthy of its title.

Early in 1809 Lamb removed from Mitre-court Buildings to Southampton Buildings, but only for a few months, and preparatory to a settlement (which he meant to be final) in the Temple. The next letter to Manning (still in China), of 28th March, 1809, is from Southampton Buildings.

TO MR. MANNING.

"So there is one of your friends whom you will never see again! Perhaps the next fleet may bring you a letter from Martin Burney, to say that he writes by desire of Miss Lamb, who is not well enough to write herself, to inform you that her brother died on Thursday last, 14th June, &c. But I hope *not*. I should be sorry to give occasion to open a correspondence between Martin and you. This letter must be short, for I have driven it off to the very moment of doing up the packets; and besides, that which I refer to above is a very long one; and if you have received my books, you will have enough to do to read them. While I think on it, let me tell you we are moved. Don't come any more to Mitre-court Buildings. We are at 34 Southampton Buildings, Chancery-lane, and shall be here till about the end of May, then we remove to No. 4 Inner Temple-lane, where I mean to live and die; for I have such horror of moving, that I would not take a benefice from the king if I was not indulged with nonresidence. What a dislocation of comfort is comprised in that word moving! Such a heap of little nasty things, after you think all is got into the cart; old dredging-boxes, worn-out brushes, gallipots, vials, things that it is impossible the most necessitous person can ever want, but which the women, who

preside on these occasions, will not leave behind if it was to save your soul; they'd keep the cart ten minutes to stow in dirty pipes and broken matches, to show their economy. Then you can find nothing you want for many days after you get into your new lodgings. You must comb your hair with your fingers, wash your hands without soap, go about in dirty gaiters. Was I Diogenes, I would not move out of a kilderkin into a hogshead, though the first had nothing but small beer in it, and the second reeked claret. Our place of final destination—I don't mean the grave, but No. 4 Inner Temple-lane—looks out upon a gloomy churchyard-like court, called Hare Court, with three trees and a pump in it. Do you know it? I was born near it, and used to drink at that pump when I was a Rechabite of six years old. If you see newspapers you will read about Mrs. Clarke. The sensation in London about this nonsensical business is marvellous. I remember nothing in my life like it. Thousands of ballads, caricatures, lives of Mrs. Clarke, in every blind alley. Yet, in the midst of this stir, a sublime abstracted dancing-master, who attends a family we know at Kensington, being asked a question about the progress of the examinations in the House, inquired who Mrs. Clarke was? He had heard nothing of it. He had evaded this omnipresence by utter insignificancy! The duke should make that man his confidential valet. I proposed locking him up, barring him the use of his fiddle and red pumps, until he had minutely perused and committed to memory the whole body of the examinations, which employed the House of Commons a fortnight, to teach him to be more attentive to what concerns the public. I think I told you of Godwin's little book and of Coleridge's prospectus in my last; if I did not, remind me of it, and I will send you them, or an account of them, next fleet. I have no conveniency of doing it by this. Mrs. —— grows every day in disfavour with me. I will be buried with this inscription over me:—'Here lies C. L., the woman-hater:' I mean, that hated one woman: for the rest, God bless them! How do you like the Mandarinesses? Are you on some little footing with any of them? This is Wednesday. On Wednesdays is my levee. The captain, Martin, Phillips (not the sheriff), Rickman, and some more, are constant attendants, besides stray visiters. We play at whist, eat cold meat and hot potatoes, and any gentleman that chooses smokes. Why do you never drop in? You'll come some day, won't you?

"C. LAMB, &c."

His next is after his removal to the Temple.

TO MR. MANNING.

"Dear Manning—When I last wrote you I was in lodgings. I am now in chambers, No. 4 Inner Temple-lane, where I should be happy to see you any evening. Bring any of your friends, the Mandarins, with you. I have two sitting-rooms: I call them so *par excellence*, for you may stand, or loll, or lean, or try any posture in them, but they are best for sitting; not squatting down Japanese fashion, but the more decorous mode which European usage has consecrated. I have two of these rooms on the third floor, and five sleeping, cooking, &c. rooms on the fourth floor. In my best room is a choice collection of the works of Hogarth, an English painter, of some humour. In my next best are shelves containing a small but well-chosen library. My best room commands a court, in which there are trees and a pump, the water of which is excellent cold with brandy, and not very insipid without. Here I hope to set up my rest, and not quit till Mr. Powell, the undertaker, gives me notice that I may have possession of my last lodging. He lets lodgings for single gentlemen. I sent you a parcel of books by my last to give you some idea of the state of European literature. There comes with this two volumes, done up as letters, of minor poetry, a sequel to Mrs. 'Leicester;' the best you may suppose mine; the next best are my coadjutor's; you may amuse yourself in guessing them out; but I must tell you mine are but one third in quantity of the whole. So much for a very delicate subject. It is hard to speak of one's self, &c. Holcroft had finished his life when I wrote to you, and Hazlitt has since finished his life; I do not mean his own life, but he has finished a life of Holcroft, which is going to press. Tuthill is Doctor Tuthill. I continue Mr. Lamb. I have published a little book for children on titles of honour; and, to give them some idea of the difference of rank and gradual rising, I have made a little scale, supposing myself to receive the following various accessions of dignity from the king, who is the fountain of honour—As at first, 1. Mr. C. Lamb; 2. C. Lamb, Esq.; 3. Sir C. Lamb, Bart.; 4. Baron Lamb of Stamford;* 5. Viscount Lamb; 6. Earl Lamb; 7. Marquis Lamb; 8. Duke Lamb. It would look like quibbling to carry it on further, and especially as it is not necessary for children to go beyond the ordinary titles of sub-regal dignity in our own country, otherwise I have sometimes in my dreams imagined myself still advancing, as 9th, King Lamb; 10th, Emperor Lamb; 11th,

* "Where my family came from. I have chosen that if ever I should have my choice."

Pope Innocent, higher than which is nothing. Puns I have not made many (nor punch much) since the date of my last; one I cannot help relating. A constable in Salisbury Cathedral was telling me that eight people dined at the top of the spire of the cathedral, upon which I remarked that they must be very sharp set. But, in general, I cultivate the reasoning part of my mind more than the imaginative. I am stuffed out so with eating turkey for dinner, and another turkey for supper yesterday (Turkey in Europe and Turkey in Asia), that I can't jog on. It is Newyear here. That is, it was Newyear half a year back, when I was writing this. Nothing puzzles me more than time and space, and yet nothing puzzles me less, for I never think about them. The Persian ambassador is the principal thing talked of now. I sent some people to see him worship the sun on Primrose Hill, at half past six in the morning, 28th November; but he did not come, which makes me think the old fire-worshippers are a sect almost extinct in Persia. The Persian ambassador's name is Shaw Ali Mirza. The common people call him Shaw Nonsense. While I think of it, I have put three letters besides my own three into the India post for you, from your brother, sister, and some gentleman whose name I forget. Will they, have they, did they, come safe? The distance you are at cuts up tenses by the root.. I think you said you did not know Kate *********. I express her by nine stars, though she is but one. You must have seen her at her father's. Try and remember her. Coleridge is bringing out a paper in weekly numbers, called the 'Friend,' which I would send if I could; but the difficulty I had in getting the packets of books out to you before deters me; and you'll want something new to read when you come home. Except Kate, I have had no vision of excellence this year, and she passed by like the queen on her coronation day; you don't know whether you saw her or not. Kate is fifteen; I go about moping, and sing the old pathetic ballad I used to like in my youth—

'She's sweet fifteen,
I'm *one year more.*'

"Mrs. Bland sung it in boy's clothes the first time I heard it. I sometimes think the lower notes in my voice are like Mrs. Bland's. That glorious singer, Braham, one of my lights, is fled. He was for a season. He was a rare composition of the Jew, the gentleman, and the angel, yet all these elements mixed up so kindly in him, that you could not tell which preponderated; but he is gone, and one —— is engaged instead. Kate is vanished, but Miss B—— is always to be met with!

'Queens drop away, while blue-legg'd Maukin thrives;
And courtly Mildred dies while country Madge survives.'

That is not my poetry, but Quarles's; but haven't you observed that the rarest things are the least obvious? Don't show anybody the names in this letter. I write confidentially, and wish this letter to be considered as *private*. Hazlitt has written a *grammar* for Godwin; Godwin sells it bound up with a treatise of his own on language, but the *gray mare is the better horse*. I don't allude to Mrs. ——, but to the word *grammar*, which comes near to *gray mare*, if you observe, in sound. That figure is called paranomasia in Greek. I am sometimes happy in it. An old woman begged of me for charity. 'Ah! sir,' said she, 'I have seen better days.' 'So have I, good woman,' I replied; but I meant literally, days not so rainy and overcast as that on which she begged: she meant more prosperous days. Mr. Dawe is made associate of the Royal Academy, by what law of association I can't guess. Mrs. Holcroft, Miss Holcroft, Mr. and Mrs. Godwin, Mr. and Mrs. Hazlitt, Mrs. Martin and Louisa, Mrs. Lum, Capt. Burney, Mrs. Burney, Martin Burney, Mr. Rickman, Mrs. Rickman, Dr. Stoddart, William Dollin, Mr. Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Norris, Mr. Fenwick, Mrs. Fenwick, Miss Fenwick, a man that saw you at our house one day, and a lady that heard me speak of you; Mrs Buffam that heard Hazlitt mention you, Dr. Tuthill, Mrs. Tuthill, Colonel Harwood, Mrs. Harwood, Mr. Collier, Mrs. Collier, Mr. Sutton, Nurse, Mr. Fell, Mrs. Fell, Mr. Marshall, are very well, and occasionally inquire after you.

"I remain yours ever,
"CH. LAMB.

"2d January, 1810."

In the summer of 1810 Lamb and his sister spent their holydays with Hazlitt, who, having married Miss Stoddart, was living in a house belonging to his wife's family at Winterslow, on the border of Salisbury Plain. The following letter, of 12th July in this year, was addressed to Mr. Montague, who had urged him to employ a part of his leisure in a compilation.

TO MR. MONTAGUE.

"Dear Montague—I have turned and twisted the MSS. in my head, and can make nothing of them. I knew when I took them that I could not, but I do not like to do an act of ungracious necessity at once; so I am ever committing myself by half engagements and total failures. I cannot make any-

body understand why I can't do such things; it is a defect in my occiput. I cannot put other people's thoughts together; I forget every paragraph as fast as I read it; and my head has received such a shock by an all-night journey on the top of the coach, that I shall have enough to do to nurse it into its natural pace before I go home. I must devote myself to imbecility; I must be gloriously useless while I stay here. How is Mrs. M.? will she pardon my inefficiency? The city of Salisbury is full of weeping and wailing. The bank has stopped payment; and everybody in the town kept money at it, or has got some of its notes. Some have lost all they had in the world. It is the next thing to seeing a city with the plague within its walls. The Wilton people are all undone; all the manufacturers there kept cash at the Salisbury bank; and I do suppose it to be the unhappiest county in England this, where I am making holyday. We purpose setting out for Oxford Tuesday fortnight, and coming thereby home. But no more night travelling. My head is sore (understand it of the inside) with that deduction from my natural rest which I suffered coming down. Neither Mary nor I can spare a morsel of our rest; it is incumbent on us to be misers of it. Travelling is not good for us, we travel so seldom. If the sun be hell, it is not for the fire, but for the sempiternal motion of that miserable body of light. How much more dignified leisure hath a muscle, glued to his unpassable rocky limit, two inches square! He hears the tide roll over him, backward and forward, twice a day (as the Salisbury long coach goes and returns in forty-eight hours), but knows better than to take an outside night-place a top on't. He is the owl of the sea—Minerva's fish—the fish of wisdom.

"Our kindest remembrances to Mrs. M.

"Yours truly,

"C. LAMB."

The following is Lamb's postscript to a letter of Miss Lamb to Miss Wordsworth, after their return to London:

"Mary has left a little space for me to fill up with nonsense, as the geographers used to cram monsters in the voids of the maps, and call it Terra Incognita. She has told you how she has taken to water like a hungry otter. I too limp after her in lame imitation, but it goes against me a little at first. I have been acquaintance with it now for full four days, and it seems a moon. I am full of cramps, and rheumatisms, and cold internally, so that fire won't warm me; yet I bear all for virtue's sake. Must I then leave you, gin, rum, brandy,

aquavitæ, pleasant jolly fellows? Hang temperance and he that first invented it! some Anti-Noahite. C—— has powdered his head, and looks like Bacchus, Bacchus ever sleek and young. He is going to turn sober, but his clock has not struck yet; meantime he pours down goblet after goblet, the second to see where the first is gone, the third to see no harm happens to the second, a fourth to say there is another coming, and a fifth to say he is not sure he is the last."

In the autumn of this year, the establishment of a Quarterly Magazine, entitled the "Reflector," opened a new sphere for Lamb's powers as a humourist and critic. Its editor, Mr. Leigh Hunt, having been educated in the same school, enjoyed many associations and friendships in common with him, and was thus able to excite in Lamb the greatest motive for exertion in the zeal of kindness. In this magazine appeared some of Lamb's noblest effusions; his essay "On Garrick and Acting," which contains the character of Lear, perhaps the noblest criticism ever written, and on the noblest human subject; his delightful "Essays on Hogarth;" his "Farewell to Tobacco," and several of the choicest of his gayer pieces.

The number of the Quarterly Review for December, 1811, contained an attack upon Lamb, which it would be difficult, as well as painful, to characterize as it deserves. Mr. Weber, in his edition of "Faust," had extracted Lamb's note on the catastrophe of "The Broken Heart," in which Lamb, speaking of that which he regarded as the highest exhibition of tragic suffering which human genius had depicted, dared an illusion which was perhaps too bold for those who did not understand the peculiar feeling by which it was suggested, but which no unprejudiced mind could mistake for the breathing of other than a pious spirit. In reviewing Mr. Weber, the critic, who was also the editor of the Review, thus complains of the quotation—"We have a more serious charge to bring against the editor than the omission of points, or the misapprehension of words. He has polluted his pages with the blasphemies *of a poor maniac*, who, it seems, once published some detached scenes of the 'Broken Heart.' For this unfortunate creature every feeling mind will find an apology in his calamitous situation; but for Mr. Weber, we know not where the warmest of his friends will find palliation or excuse." It would be unjust to attribute this paragraph to the accidental association of Lamb in literary undertakings with persons like Mr. Hunt, strongly opposed to the political opinions of Mr. Gifford. It seems rather the peculiar expression of the distaste of a small though acute mind for an original

power which it could not appreciate, and which disturbed the conventional associations of which it was master, aggravated by bodily weakness and disease. Notwithstanding this attack, Lamb was prompted by his admiration for Wordsworth's "Excursion" to contribute a review of that work, on its appearance, to the Quarterly, and he anticipated great pleasure in the poet's approval of his criticism; but, when the review appeared, the article was so mercilessly mangled by the editor, that Lamb entreated Wordsworth not to read it. For these grievances Lamb at length took a very gentle revenge in the following

SONNET.

SAINT CRISPIN TO MR. GIFFORD.

All unadvised, and in an evil hour,
Lured by aspiring thoughts, my son, you daft
The lowly labours of the "Gentle Craft"
For learned toils, which blood and spirits sour.
All things, dear pledge, are not in all men's power
The wiser sort of shrub affects the ground;
And sweet content of mind is oftener found
In cobbler's parlour than in critic's bower.
The sorest work is what doth cross the grain,
And better to this hour you had been plying
The obsequious awl, with well-waxed finger flying,
Than ceaseless thus to till a thankless vein:
Still teasing muses which are still denying;
Making a stretching-leather of your brain.

St. Crispin's Eve.

Lamb, as we have seen, cared nothing for politics; yet his desire to serve his friends sometimes induced him to adopt for a short time their view of public affairs, and assist them with a harmless pleasantry. The following epigram on the disappointment of the whig associates of the regent appeared in the "Examiner."

Ye politicians, tell me, pray,
While thus with wo and care rent?
This is the worst that you can say,
Some wind has blown the *Wig* away,
And left the *Hair Apparent.*

The following, also published in the same paper, would probably have only caused a smile if read by the regent himself, and may now be republished without offence to any one. At the time when he wrote it, Lamb used to stop any passionate attacks upon the prince with the smiling remark, "*I* love my regent"

THE TRIUMPH OF THE WHALE.

Io! Pæan! Io! sing,
To the finny people's king,
Not a mightier whale than this
In the vast Atlantic is,
Not a fatter fish than he
Flounders round the Polar Sea.
See his blubber—at his gills
What a world of drink he swills!
From his trunk, as from a spout,
Which next moment he pours out.
Such his person. Next declare,
Muse, who his companions are:
Every fish of generous kind
Scuds aside, or slinks behind;
But about his presence keep
All the monsters of the deep;
Mermaids, with their tails and singing,
His delighted fancy stinging;
Crooked dolphins, they surround him;
Doglike seals, they fawn around him;
Following hard, the progress mark
Of the intolerant salt sea shark;
For his solace and relief,
Flatfish are his courtiers chief;
Last and lowest in his train,
Inkfish (libellers of the main),
Their black liquor shed in spite:
(Such on earth *the things that write.*)
In his stomach, some do say,
No good thing can ever stay:
Had it been the fortune of it
To have swallow'd that old prophet,
Three days there he'd not have dwell'd,
But in one have been expell'd.
Hapless mariners are they,
Who, beguiled (as seamen say),
Deeming him some rock or island,
Footing sure, safe spot, and dry land,
Anchor in his scaly rind—
Soon the difference they find;
Sudden plumb! he sinks beneath them,
Does to ruthless seas bequeath them.
Name or title what has he?
Is he Regent of the Sea?
From this difficulty free us,
Buffon, Banks, or sage Linnæus,
With his wondrous attributes,
Say, what appellation suits?
By his bulk, and by his size,
By his oily qualities,
This (or else my eyesight fails),
This should be the Prince of Whales.

The devastation of the Park in the summer of 1814, by reason of the rejoicings on the visit of the allied sovereigns, produced the following letter from Lamb to Wordsworth.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Save for a late excursion to Harrow, and a day or two

on the banks of the Thames this summer, rural images were fast fading from my mind, and by the wise provision of the regent all that was countryfied in the parks is just obliterated. The very colour of green is vanished, the whole surface of Hyde Park is dry crumbling sand (Arabia Arenosa), not a vestige or hint of grass ever having grown there; booths and drinking-places go all round it, for a mile and a half I am confident—I might say two miles, in circuit—the stench of liquors, *bad* tobacco, dirty people, and provisions, conquers the air, and we are all stifled and suffocated in Hyde Park. Order after order has been issued by Lord Sidmouth in the name of the regent (acting in behalf of his royal father) for the dispersion of the varlets, but in vain. The *vis unita* of all the publicans in London, Westminster, Marylebone, and miles round, is too powerful a force to put down. The regent has raised a phantom which he cannot lay. There they'll stay, probably, for ever. The whole beauty of the place is gone—that lake-look of the Serpentine—it has got foolish ships upon it—but something whispers to have confidence in nature and its revival—

> At the coming of the *milder day*,
> These monuments shall all be overgrown.

Meantime I confess to have smoked one delicious pipe in one of the cleanliest and goodliest of the booths; a tent rather—

> 'Oh call it not a booth!'

erected by the public spirit of Watson, who keeps the Adam and Eve at Pancras (the alehouses have all emigrated, with their train of bottles, mugs, corkscrews, waiters, into Hyde Park—whole alehouses with all their ale!), in company with some of the Guards that had been in France, and a fine French girl, habited like a princess of banditti, which one of the dogs had transported from the Garonne to the Serpentine. The unusual scene in Hyde Park, by candlelight, in open air, good tobacco, bottled stout, made it look like an interval in a campaign, a repose after battle. I almost fancied scars smarting, and was ready to club a story with my comrades of some of my lying deeds. After all, the fireworks were splendid; the rockets in clusters, in trees, and all shapes, spreading about like young stars in the making, floundering about in space (like unbroke horses), till some of Newton's calculations should fix them; but then they went out. Any one who could see 'em, and the still finer showers of gloomy rain-fire that fell sulkily and angrily from 'em, and could go to bed without dreaming of the last day, must be a hardened atheist.

"Again let me thank you for your present, and assure you

that fireworks and triumphs have not distracted me from receiving a calm and noble enjoyment from it (which I trust I shall often), and I sincerely congratulate you on its appearance.

"With kindest remembrances to you and household, we remain yours sincerely,

"C. LAMB and Sister.

9th August, 1814."

The following are fragments of letters to Coleridge in the same month. The first is in answer to a solicitation of Coleridge for a supply of German books.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"13th Aug., 1814.

"Dear Resuscitate—There comes to you by the vehicle from Ladlane this day a volume of German; what it is I cannot justly say, the characters of those northern nations having been always singularly harsh and unpleasant to me. It is a contribution of Dr. —— towards your wants, and you would have had it sooner but for an odd accident. I wrote for it three days ago, and the doctor, as he thought, sent it me. A book of like exterior he did send, but, being disclosed, how far unlike! It was the 'Well-bred Scholar,' a book with which, it seems, the doctor laudably fills up those hours which he can steal from his medical avocations (Chesterfield, Blair, Beattie, portions from 'The Life of Savage,' make up a prettyish system of morality and the belles lettres, which Mr. Mylne, a schoolmaster, has properly brought together, and calls the collection by the denomination above mentioned); the doctor had no sooner discovered his error, than he despatched man and horse to rectify the mistake, and, with a pretty kind of ingenuous modesty in his note, seemeth to deny any knowledge of the 'Well-bred Scholar;' false modesty, surely, and a blush misplaced; for what more pleasing than the consideration of professional austerity thus relaxing, thus improving! But so, when a child, I remember blushing, being caught on my knees, or doing otherwise some pious and praiseworthy action: *now* I rather love such things to be seen. Henry Crabb Robinson is out upon his circuit, and his books are inaccessible without his leave and key. He is attending the Norfolk Circuit—a short term, but to him, as to many young lawyers, a long vacation, sufficiently dreary.* I thought I could do no better than transmit to him, not extracts, but your very letter itself, than which I think I never read anything more moving, more

* A mistake of Lamb's, at which the excellent person referred to may smile, now that he has retired from his profession, and has no business but the offices of kindness.

pathetic, or more conducive to the purpose of persuasion. The Crab is a sour Crab if it does not sweeten him. I think it would draw another third volume of Dodsley out of me; but you say you don't want any English books? Perhaps, after all, that's as well; one's romantic credulity is for ever misleading one into misplaced acts of foolery. Crab might have answered by this time; his juices take a long time supplying, but they'll run at last—I know they will—pure golden pippin. A fearful rumour has since reached me that the Crab is on the eve of setting out for France. If he is in England your letter will reach him, and I flatter myself a touch of he persuasive of my own, which accompanies it, will not be thrown away: if it be, he is a sloe, and no true-hearted crab, and there's an end. For that life of the German conjuror which you speak of, 'Colerus de Vitâ Doctoris vix-Intelligibilis,' I perfectly remember the last evening we spent with Mrs. M—— and Miss B——, in London-street (by that token we had rabbits for supper, and Miss B—— prevailed upon me to take a glass of brandy and water after supper, which is not my habit)—I perfectly remember reading portions of that life in their parlour, and I think it must be among their packages. It was the very last evening we were at that house. What is gone of that frankhearted circle, M——, and his gos-lettuces? He ate walnuts better than any man I ever knew. Friendships in these parts stagnate.

* * * * * *

"I am going to eat turbot, turtle, venison, marrow pudd.—cold punch, claret, Madeira—at our annual feast, at half past four this day. They keep bothering me (I'm in office), and my ideas are confused. Let me know if I can be of any service as to books. God forbid the Architectonican should be sacrificed to a foolish scruple of some book-proprietor, as if books did not belong with the highest propriety to those that understand 'em best. C. Lamb."

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"26th August, 1814.

"Let the hungry soul rejoice, there is corn in Egypt. Whatever thou hast been told to the contrary by designing friends, who perhaps inquired carelessly, or did not inquire at all, in hope of saving their money, there is a stock of 'Remorse' on hand, enough, as Pople conjectures, for seven years' consumption, judging from experience of the last two years. Methinks it makes for the benefit of sound literature, that the best books do not always go off best. Inquire in seven years' time for the 'Rokebys' and the 'Laras,' and where shall they

be found?—fluttering fragmentally in some thread-paper; whereas thy 'Wallenstein' and thy 'Remorse' are safe on Longman's or Pople's shelves, as in some Bodleian, there they shall remain; no need of a chain to hold them fast—perhaps for ages—tall copies—and people sha'n't run about hunting for them as in old Ezra's shrievalty they did for a Bible, almost without effect, till the great-great-grand-niece (by the mother's side) of Jeremiah or Ezekiel (which was it?) remembered something of a book, with odd reading in it, that used to lie in the green closet in her aunt Judith's bed-chamber.

"Thy caterer, Price, was at Hamburgh when last Pople heard of him, laying up for thee like some miserly old father for his generous-hearted son to squander.

"Mr. Charles Aders, whose books also pant for that free circulation which thy custody is sure to give them, is to be heard of at his kinsmen, Messrs. Jameson and Aders, No. 7 Laurence Pountney-lane, London, according to the information which Crabius with his parting breath left me. Crabius is gone to Paris. I prophesy he and the Parisians will part with mutual contempt. His head has a twist Allemagne, like thine, dear mystic.

"I have been reading Madame Stael on Germany. An impudent clever woman. But if 'Faust' be no better than in her abstract of it, I counsel thee to let it alone. How canst thou translate the language of cat-monkeys? Fy on such fanta sies! But I will not forget to look for Proclus. It is a kind of book, when one meets with it, one shuts the lid faster than one opened it. Yet I have some bastard kind of recollection that somewhere, some time ago, upon some stall or other, I saw it. It was either that, or Plotinus, or Saint Augustine's 'City of God.' So little do some folks value what to others, *sc.* to you, 'well used,' had been the 'Pledge of Immortality. Bishop Bruno I never touched upon. Stuffing too good for the brains of such 'a Hare' as thou describest. May it burst his pericranium, as the gobbets of fat and turpentine (a nasty thought of the seer) did that old dragon in the Apocrypha! May he go mad in trying to understand his author! May he lend the third volume of him before he has quite translated the second, to a friend who shall lose it, and so spoil the publication, and his friend find it and send it him just as thou or some such less dilatory spirit shall have announced the whole for the press; lastly, may he be hunted by reviewers, and the devil jug him! Canst think of any other queries in the solution of which I can give thee satisfaction? Do you want any books that I can procure for you? Old Jimmy Boyer is dead

at last. Trollope has got his living, worth 1000*l.* a year nett. See, thou sluggard, thou heretic sluggard, what mightst thou not have arrived at. Lay thy animosity against Jimmy in the grave. Do not *entail* it on thy posterity.

"CHARLES LAMB."

CHAPTER X.

[1815 to 1817.]

Letters to Wordsworth, Southey, and Manning.

IT was at the beginning of the year 1815 that I had first the happiness of a personal acquaintance with Mr. Lamb. With his scattered essays and poems I had become familiar a few weeks before, through the instrumentality of Mr. Barron Field, now chief-justice of Gibraltar, who had been brought into close intimacy with Lamb by the association of his own family with Christ's Hospital, of which his father was the surgeon, and by his own participation in the "Reflector." Living then in chambers in Inner Temple-lane, and attending those of Mr. Chitty, the special pleader, which were on the next staircase to Mr. Lamb's, I had been possessed some time by a desire to become acquainted with the writings of my gifted neighbour, which my friend was able only partially to gratify. "John Woodvil," and the number of the "Reflector" enriched with Lamb's article, he indeed lent me, but he had no copy of "Rosamund Gray," which I was most anxious to read, and which, after earnest search through all the bookstalls within the scope of my walks, I found, exhibiting proper marks of due appreciation, in the store of a little circulating library near Holborn. There was something in this little romance so entirely new, yet breathing the air of old acquaintance; a sense of beauty so delicate and so intense; and a morality so benignant and so profound, that, as I read it, my curiosity to see its author rose almost to the height of pain. The commencement of the new year brought me that gratification; I was invited to meet Lamb at dinner, at the house of Mr. William Evans, a gentleman holding an office in the India House, who then lived in Weymouth-street, and who was a proprietor of the "Pamphleteer," to which I had contributed some idle scribblings. My duties at the office did not allow me to avail myself of this invitation to dinner,

but I went up at ten o'clock, through a deep snow, palpably congealing into ice, and was amply repaid when I reached the hospitable abode of my friend. There was Lamb, preparing to depart, but he stayed half an hour in kindness to me, and then accompanied me to our common home—the Temple.

Methinks I see him before me now, as he appeared then, and as he continued, with scarcely any perceptible alteration to me, during the twenty years of intimacy which followed, and were closed by his death. A light frame, so fragile that it seemed as if a breath would overthrow it, clad in clerklike black, was surmounted by a head of form and expression the most noble and sweet. His black hair curled crisply about an expanded forehead; his eyes, softly brown, twinkled with varying expression, though the prevalent feeling was sad; and the nose slightly curved, and delicately carved at the nostril, with the lower outline of the face regularly oval, completed a head which was finely placed on the shoulders, and gave importance, and even dignity, to a diminutive and shadowy stem. Who shall describe his countenance—catch its quivering sweetness—and fix it for ever in words? There are none, alas! to answer the vain desire of friendship. Deep thought, striving with humour; the lines of suffering wreathed into cordial mirth; and a smile of painful sweetness, present an image to the mind it can as little describe as lose. His personal appearance and manner are not unfitly characterized by what he himself says in one of his letters to Manning of Braham—"a compound of the Jew, the gentleman, and the angel." He took my arm, and we walked to the Temple, Lamb stammering out fine remarks as we walked; and when we reached his staircase, he detained me with an urgency which would not be denied, and we mounted to the top story, where an old petted servant, called Becky, was ready to receive us. We were soon seated beside a cheerful fire; hot water and its better adjuncts were before us; and Lamb insisted on my sitting with him while he smoked "one pipe," for—alas! for poor human nature—he had resumed his acquaintance with his "fair traitress." How often the pipe and the glasses were replenished, I will not undertake to disclose; but I can never forget the conversation; though the first, it was more solemn and in higher mood than any I ever after had with Lamb through the whole of our friendship. How it took such a turn between two strangers one of them a lad of not quite twenty, I cannot tell; but so it happened. We discoursed then of life and death, and our anticipation of a world beyond the grave. Lamb spoke of

these awful themes with the simplest piety, but expressed his own fond cleavings to life—to all well-known accustomed things—and a shivering (not shuddering) sense of that which is to come, which he so finely indicated in his "Newyear's Eve" years afterward. It was two o'clock before we parted, when Lamb gave me a hearty invitation to renew my visit at pleasure; but two or three months elapsed before I saw him again. In the mean time, a number of the "Pamphleteer" contained an "Essay on the Chief Living Poets," among whom on the title appeared the name of Lamb, and some page or two were expressly devoted to his praises. It was a poor tissue of tawdry eulogies—a shallow outpouring of young enthusiasm in fine words, which it mistakes for thoughts—yet it gave Lamb, who had hitherto received scarcely civil notice from reviewers, great pleasure to find that any one recognised him as having a place among poets. The next time I saw him, he came almost breathless into the office, and proposed to give me what I should have chosen as the greatest of all possible honours and delights—an introduction to Wordsworth, who, I learned, with a palpitating heart, was actually at the next door. I hurried out with my kind conductor, and a minute after was presented by Lamb to the person whom in all the world I venerated most, with this preface:—"Wordsworth, give me leave to introduce to you my only admirer."

The following letter was addressed to Wordsworth after his return to Westmoreland from this visit:—

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"9th Aug., 1815.

"Dear Wordsworth—Mary and I felt quite queer after your taking leave (you W. W.) of us in St. Giles's. We wished we had seen more of you, but felt we had scarce been sufficiently acknowledging for the share we had enjoyed of your company. We felt as if we had been not enough *expressive* of our pleasure. But our manners *both* are a little too much on this side of too-much-cordialty. We want presence of mind and presence of heart. What we feel comes too late, like an after-thought impromptu. But perhaps you observed nothing of that which we have been painfully conscious of, and are every day in our intercourse with those we stand affected to through all the degrees of love. Robinson is on the circuit—our panegyrist I thought had forgotten one of the objects of his youthful admiration, but I was agreeably removed from that scruple by the laundress knocking at my door this morning, almost before I was up, with a present of

fruit from my young friend, &c. There is something inexpressibly pleasant to me in these *presents*, be it fruit, or fowl, or brawn, or *what not*. Books are a legitimate cause of acceptance. If presents be not the soul of friendship, undoubtedly they are the most spiritual part of the body of that intercourse. There is too much narrowness of thinking in this point. The punctilio of acceptance, methinks, is too confined and strait-laced. I could be content to receive money, or clothes, or a joint of meat from a friend. Why should he not send me a dinner as well as a dessert? I would taste him in the beasts of the field, and through all creation. Therefore did the basket of fruit of the juvenile Talfourd not displease me; not that I have any thoughts of bartering or reciprocating these things. To send him anything in return would be to reflect suspicion of mercinariness upon what I know he meant a free-will offering. Let him overcome me in bounty. In this strife a generous nature loves to be overcome. You wish me some of your leisure. I have a glimmering aspect, a chink-light of liberty before me, which, I pray God, prove not fallacious. My remonstrances have stirred up others to remonstrate, and, altogether, there is a plan for separating certain parts of business from our department; which, if it take place, will produce me more time, *i. e.*, my evenings free. It may be a means of placing me in a more conspicuous situation, which will knock at my nerves another way, but I wait the issue in submission. If I can but begin my own day at four o'clock in the afternoon, I shall think myself to have Eden days of peace and liberty to what I have had. As you say, how a man can fill three volumes up with an essay on the drama is wonderful; I am sure a very few sheets would hold all I had to say on the subject.

* * * * * *

Did you ever read 'Charon on Wisdom?' or 'Patrick's Pilgrim?' If neither, you have two great pleasures to come. I mean some day to attack Caryl on Job, six folios. What any man can write, surely I may read. If I do but get rid of auditing warehouse-keeper's accounts, and get no worse-harassing task in the place of it, what a lord of liberty I shall be! I shall dance, and skip, and make mouths at the invisible event, and pick the thorns out of my pillow, and throw 'em at rich men's nightcaps, and talk blank verse, hoity, toity, and sing—'A clerk I was in London gay,' 'Ban, ban, Ca-Caliban,' like the emancipated monster, and go where I like, up this street or down that alley. Adieu, and pray that it may be my luck.

"Good-by to you all. C. LAMB."

The following letter was enclosed in the same parcel with the last

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"1815.

"Dear Southey.—Robinson is not on the circuit, as I erroneously stated in a letter to W. W., which travels with this but is gone to Brussels, Ostend, Ghent, &c. But his friends the Colliers, whom I consulted respecting your friend's fate remember to have heard him say that Father Pardo had effected his escape (the cunning greasy rogue), and, to the best of their belief, is at present in Paris. To my thinking, it is a small matter whether there be one fat friar more or less in the world. I have rather a taste for clerical executions, imbibed from early recollections of the fate of the excellent Dodd. I hear Bonaparte has sued his habeas corpus, and the twelve judges are now sitting upon it at the Rolls.

"Your boute-feu (bonfire) must be excellent of its kind Poet Settle presided at the last great thing of the kind in London, when the pope was burnt in form. Do you provide any verses on this occasion? Your fear for Hartley's intellectuals is just and rational. Could not the chancellor be petitioned to remove him? His lordship took Mr. Betty from under the paternal wing. I think, at least, he should go through a course of matter-of-fact with some sober man after the mysteries. Could not he spend a week at Poole's before he goes back to Oxford? Tobin is dead. But there is a man in my office, a Mr. H., who proses it away from morning to night, and never gets beyond corporeal and material verities. He'd get these crack-brain metaphysics out of the young gentleman's head as soon as any one I know. When I can't sleep o' nights, I imagine a dialogue with Mr. H. upon any given subject, and go prosing on in fancy with him, till I either laugh or fall asleep. I have literally found it answer. I am going to stand godfather; I don't like the business; I cannot muster up decorum for these occasions; I shall certainly disgrace the font. I was at Hazlitt's marriage, and had like to have been turned out several times during the ceremony. Anything awful makes me laugh. I misbehaved once at a funeral. Yet I can read about these ceremonies with pious and proper feelings. The realities of life only seem the mockeries. I fear I must get cured along with Hartley, if not too inveterate. Don't you think Louis the Desirable is in a sort of quandary?

"After all, Bonaparte is a fine fellow, as my barber says, and I should not mind standing bareheaded at his table to do him service in his fall. They should have given him Hamp-

ton Court or Kensington, with a tether extending forty miles round London. Qu. Would not the people have ejected the Brunswicks some day in his favour? Well, we shall see.

"C. LAMB."

The following was addressed to Southey in acknowledgment of his "Roderick," the most sustained and noble of his poems.

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"Dear Southey—I have received from Longman a copy of 'Roderick,' with the author's compliments, for which I much thank you. I don't know where I shall put all the noble presents I have lately received in that way; the 'Excursion,' Wordsworth's two last vols., and now 'Roderick,' have come pouring in upon me like some irruption from Helicon. The story of the brave Maccabee was already, you may be sure, familiar to me in all its parts. I have, since the receipt of your present, read it quite through again, and with no diminished pleasure. I don't know whether I ought to say that it has given me more pleasure than any of your long poems. 'Kehama' is doubtless more powerful, but I don't feel that firm footing in it that I do in 'Roderick;' my imagination goes sinking and floundering in the vast spaces of unopened-before systems and faiths; I am put out of the pale of my old sympathies; my moral sense is almost outraged; I can't believe, or with horror am made to believe, such desperate chances against omnipotences, such disturbances of faith to the centre; the more potent the more painful the spell. Jove, and his brotherhood of gods, tottering with the giant assailings, I can bear, for the soul's hopes are not struck at in such contests; but your oriental almighties are too much types of the intangible prototype to be meddled with without shuddering. One never connects what are called the attributes with Jupiter. I mention only what diminishes my delight at the wonder-workings of 'Kehama,' not what impeaches its power, which I confess with trembling; but 'Roderick' is a comfortable poem. It reminds me of the delight I took in the first reading of the 'Joan of Arc.' It is maturer and better than *that*, though not better to me now than that was then. It suits me better than Madoc. I am at home in Spain and Christendom. I have a timid imagination, I am afraid. I do not willingly admit of strange beliefs, or out-of-the-way creeds or places. I never read books of travels, at least not farther than Paris or Rome. I can just endure Moors, because of their connexion as foes with Christians; but Abyssinians, Ethiops, Esquimaux, Der-

vises, and all that tribe, I hate. I believe I fear them in some manner. A Mohammedan turban on the stage, though enveloping some well-known face (Mr. Cook or Mr. Maddox, whom I see another day good Christian and English waiters, inn-keepers, &c.), does not give me pleasure unalloyed. I am a Christian, Englishman, Londoner, *Templar*. God help me, when I come to put off these snug relations, and to get abroad into the world to come! I shall be like *the crow on the sand*, as Wordsworth has it; but I won't think on it; no need, I hope, yet.

"The parts I have been most pleased with, both on first and second readings, perhaps are Florinda's palliation of Roderick's crime, confessed to him in his disguise—the retreat of the Palayos family first discovered—his being made king—'For acclamation one form must serve, *more solemn for* the *breach* of *old observances*.' Roderick's vow is extremely fine, and his blessing on the vow of Alphonso:

> 'Towards the troop he spread his arms,
> As if the expanded soul diffused itself,
> And carried to all spirits *with the act*
> Its affluent inspiration.'

"It struck me forcibly that the feeling of these last lines might have been suggested to you by the Cartoon of Paul at Athens. Certain it is that a better motto or guide to that famous attitude can nowhere be found. I shall adopt it as explanatory of that violent but dignified motion. I must read again Landor's 'Julian.' I have not read it some time. I think he must have failed in Roderick, for I remember nothing of him, nor of any distinct character as a character—only fine-sounding passages. I remember thinking also he had chosen a point of time after the event, as it were, for Roderick survives to no use; but my memory is weak, and I will not wrong a fine poem by trusting to it. The notes to your poem I have not read again; but it will be a take-downable book on my shelf, and they will serve sometimes at breakfast, or times too light for the text to be duly appreciated. Though some of 'em, one of the serpent penance, is serious enough, now I think on't. Of Coleridge I hear nothing, nor of the Morgans. I hope to have him, like a reappearing star, standing up before me some time when least expected in London as has been the case whylear.

"I am *doing* nothing (as the phrase is) but reading presents, and walk away what of the day-hours I can get from hard occupation. Pray accept once more my hearty thanks and expression of pleasure for your remembrance of me. My

sister desires her kind respects to Mrs. S. and to all at Keswick.

"Yours truly,
"C. LAMB.

"London, 6th May, 1815

"The next present I look for is the 'White Doe.' Have you seen Mat. Bentham's 'Lay of Marie?' I think it very delicately pretty as to sentiment, &c."

The following is an extract of a letter addressed shortly afterward

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Since I saw you I have had a treat in the reading way which comes not every day; the Latin poems of Vincent Bourne, which were quite new to me. What a heart that man had, all laid out upon town-scenes, a proper counterpart to *some people's* extravagances. Why I mention him is, that your 'Power of Music' reminded me of his poem of the ballad-singer in the Seven Dials. Do you remember his epigram on the old woman who taught Newton the A, B, C, which, after all, he says, he hesitates not to call Newton's *Principia*?

"I was lately fatiguing myself with going over a volume of fine words by ——, excellent words; and if the heart could live by words alone, it could desire no better regale; but what an aching vacuum of matter! I don't stick at the madness of it, for that is only a consequence of shutting his eyes, and thinking he is in the age of the old Elizabeth poets. From thence I turned to V. Bourne; what a sweet, unpretending, pretty-mannered, *matter-full* creature! sucking from every flower, making a flower of everything. His diction all Latin, and his thoughts all English. Bless him! Latin wasn't good enough for him. Why wasn't he content with the language which Gay and Prior wrote in?"

The associations of Christmas increased the fervour of Lamb's wishes for Manning's return, which he now really hoped for. On Christmas-day he addressed a letter to him at Canton, and the next day another to meet him half way home, at St. Helena, &c. There seems the distance of half a globe between these letters. The first, in which Lamb pictures their dearest common friends as in a melancholy future, and makes it present—lying like dismal truths—yet with a relieving consciousness of a power to dispel the sad enchantments he has

woven, has perhaps more of what was peculiar in Lamb's cast of thought than anything of the same length which he has left us.

TO MR. MANNING.

"Dear old friend and absentee—This is Christmas-day 1815, with us; what it may be with you I don't know, the 12th of June next year, perhaps; and if it should be the consecrated season with you, I don't see how you can keep it. You have no turkeys; you would not desecrate the festival by offering up a withered Chinese bantam instead of the savoury grand Norfolcian holocaust, that smokes all around my nostrils at this moment from a thousand firesides. Then what puddings have you? Where will you get holly to stick in your churches, or churches to stick your dried tea-leaves (that must be the substitute) in? What memorials you can have of the holy time, I see not. A chopped missionary or two may keep up the thin idea of Lent and the wilderness; but what standing evidences have you of the Nativity? 'tis our rosy-cheeked, homestalled divines, whose faces shine to the tune of Christmas; faces fragrant with the mince-pies of half a century, that alone can authenticate the cheerful mystery—I feel, I feel myself refreshed with the thought—my zeal is great against the unedified heathen. Down with the pagodas—down with the idols—Ching-chong-fo—and his foolish priesthood! Come out of Babylon, oh my friend! for her time is come, and the child that is native, and the proselyte of her gates, shall kindle and smoke together! And, in sober sense, what makes you so long from among us, Manning? You must not expect to see the same England again which you left.

"Empires have been overturned, crowns trodden into dust, the face of the western world quite changed; your friends have all got old—those you left blooming—myself (who am one of the few that remember you)—those golden hairs which you recollect my taking a pride in, turned to silvery and gray Mary has been dead and buried many years; she desired to be buried in the silk gown you sent her. Rickman, that you remember active and strong, now walks out supported by a servant-maid and a stick. Martin Burney is a very old man. The other day an aged woman knocked at my door, and pretended to my acquaintance; it was long before I had the most distant cognition of her; but at last, together, we made her out to be Louisa, the daughter of Mrs. Topham, formerly Mrs. Morton, who had been Mrs. Reynolds, formerly Mrs. Kenny, whose first husband was Holcroft, the dramatic writer of the last century. St. Paul's church is a heap of ruins; the Mon-

ument is not half so high as you knew it, divers parts being successively taken down, which the ravages of time had rendered dangerous; the horse at Charing Cross is gone, no one knows whither; and all this has taken place while you have been settling whether Ho-hing-tong should be spelled with a—— or a——. For aught I see, you had almost as well remain where you are, and not come like a Strulbug into a world where few were born when you went away. Scarce here and there one will be able to make out your face; all your opinions will be out of date, your jokes obsolete, your puns rejected with fastidiousness as wit of the last age. Your way of mathematics has already given way to a new method, which, after all, is, I believe, the old doctrine of Maclaurin, new vamped up with what he borrowed of the negative quantity of fluxions from Euler.

"Poor Godwin! I was passing his tomb the other day in Cripplegate churchyard. There are some verses upon it written by Miss ——, which, if I thought good enough, I would send you. He was one of those who would have hailed your return, not with boisterous shouts and clamours, but with the complacent gratulations of a philosopher anxious to promote knowledge as leading to happiness—but his systems and his theories are ten feet deep in Cripplegate mould Coleridge is just dead, having lived just long enough to close the eyes of Wordsworth, who paid the debt to nature but a week or two before—poor Col., but two days before he died, he wrote to a bookseller proposing an epic poem on the 'Wanderings of Cain,' in twenty-four books. It is said he has left behind him more than forty thousand treatises in criticism, metaphysics, and divinity, but few of them in a state of completion. They are now destined, perhaps, to wrap up spices. You see what mutations the busy hand of Time has produced, while you have consumed in foolish voluntary exile that time which might have gladdened your friends, benefited your country; but reproaches are useless. Gather up the wretched relics, my friend, as fast as you can, and come to your old home. I will rub my eyes and try to recognise you. We will shake withered hands together, and talk of old things —of St. Mary's church and the barber's opposite, where the young students in mathematics used to assemble. Poor Crips, that kept it afterward, set up a fruiterer's shop in Trumpington-street, and, for aught I know, resides there still, for I saw the name up in the last journey I took there with my sister, just before she died. I suppose you heard that I had left the India House, and gone into the Fishmonger's Almshouses over the bridge. I have a little cabin there, small and home-

ly, but you shall be welcome to it. You like oysters, and to open them yourself; I'll get you some if you come in oyster-time. Marshall, Godwin's friend, is still alive, and talks of the faces you used to make.

"Come as soon as you can.

"C. LAMB."

Here is the next day's reverse of the picture.

TO MR. MANNING.

"Dec. 26, 1815.

"Dear Manning—Following your brother's example, I have just ventured one letter to Canton, and am now hazarding another (not exactly a duplicate) to St. Helena. The first was full of unprobable romantic fictions, fitting the remoteness of the mission it goes upon; in the present I mean to confine myself nearer to truth as you come nearer home. A correspondence with the uttermost parts of the earth necessarily involves in it some heat of fancy; it sets the brain a going; but I can think on the half-way house tranquilly. Your friends, then, are not all dead or grown forgetful of you through old age, as that lying letter asserted, anticipating rather what must happen if you kept tarrying on for ever on the skirts of creation, as there seemed a danger of your doing; but they are all tolerably well and in full and perfect comprehension of what is meant by Manning's coming home again. Mrs. —— never lets her tongue run riot more than in remembrances of you. Fanny expends herself in phrases that can only be justified by her romantic nature. Mary reserves a portion of your silk, not to be buried in (as the false nuncio asserts), but to make up spick and span into a bran-new gown to wear when you come. I am the same as when you knew me, almost to a surfeiting identity. This very night I am going to *leave off tobacco!* Surely in another world this unconquerable purpose shall be realized. The soul hath not her generous aspirings implanted in her in vain. One that you knew, and, I think, the only one of those friends we knew much of in common, has died in earnest. Poor Priscilla! Her brother Robert is also dead, and several of the grown-up brothers and sisters, in the compass of a very few years. Death has not otherwise meddled much in families that I know. Not but he has his horrid eye upon us, and is whetting his infernal feathered dart every instant, as you see him truly pictured in that impressive moral picture, 'The good man at the hour of death.' I have in trust to put in the post four letters from Diss, and one from Lynn, to St. Helena, which, I hope, will accom-

pany this safe, and one from Lynn, and the one before spoken of from me, to Canton. But we all hope that these letters may be waste paper. I don't know why I have forborne writing so long. But it is such a forlorn hope to send a scrap of paper straggling over wide oceans. And yet I know, when you come home, I shall have you sitting before me at our fireside just as if you had never been away. In such an instant does the return of a person dissipate all the weight of imaginary perplexity from distance of time and space? I'll promise you good oysters. Cory is dead that kept the shop opposite St. Dunstan's, but the tougher materials of the shop survive the perishing fame of its keeper. Oysters continue to flourish under as good auspices. Poor Cory! But if you will absent yourself twenty years together, you must not expect numerically the same population to congratulate your return which wetted the seabeach with their tears when you went away. Have you recovered the breathless stone-staring astonishment into which you must have been thrown upon learning, at landing, that an Emperor of France was living in St. Helena? What an event in the solitude of the seas, like finding a fish's bone at the top of Plinlimmon; but these things are nothing in our western world. Novelties cease to affect. Come and try what your presence can.

"God bless you. Your old friend,

"C. LAMB."

The years which Lamb passed in his chambers in Inner Temple-lane were, perhaps, the happiest of his life. His salary was considerably augmented, his fame as an author was rapidly extending; he resided near the spot which he best loved, and was surrounded by a motley group of attached friends, some of them men of rarest parts, and all strongly attached to him and to his sister. Here the glory of his Wednesday nights shone forth in its greatest lustre. If you did not meet there the favourites of fortune, authors whose works bore the highest price in Paternoster Row, and who glittered in the circles of fashion, you might find those who had thought most deeply, felt most keenly, and were destined to produce the most lasting influences on the literature and manners of the age. There Hazlitt, sometimes kindling into fierce passion at any mention of the great reverses of his idol Napoleon, at other times bashfully enunciated the finest criticism on art, or dwelt with genial iteration on a passage in Chaucer; or, fresh from the theatre, expatiated on some new instance of energy in Kean, or reluctantly conceded a greatness to Kemble, or detected some popular fallacy with the

fairest and the subtlest reasoning. There Godwin, as he played his quiet rubber, or benignantly joined in the gossip of the day, sat an object of curiosity and wonder to the stranger, who had been at one time shocked or charmed with his high speculation, and at another awestruck by the force and graphic power of his novels. There Coleridge sometimes, though rarely, took his seat; and then the genial hubbub of voices was still; critics, philosophers, and poets were contented to listen; and toilworn lawyers, clerks from the India House, and members of the Stock Exchange, grew romantic while he spoke. Lamb used to say that he was inferior then to what he had been in his youth; but I can scarcely believe it; at least there is nothing in his early writing which gives any idea of the richness of his mind so lavishly poured out at this time in his happiest moods. Although he looked much older than he was, his hair being silvered all over, and his person tending to corpulency, there was about him no trace of bodily sickness or mental decay, but rather an air of voluptuous repose. His benignity of manner placed his auditors entirely at their ease, and inclined them to listen delighted to the sweet, low tone in which he began to discourse on some high theme. Whether he had won for his greedy listener only some raw lad, or charmed a circle of beauty, rank, and wit, who hung breathless on his words, he talked with equal eloquence; for his subject, not his audience, inspired him. At first his tones were conversational; he seemed to dally with the shallows of the subject and with fantastic images which bordered it; but gradually the thought grew deeper, and the voice deepened with the thought; the stream, gathering strength, seemed to bear along with it all things which opposed its progress, and blended them with its current; and, stretching away among regions tinted with ethereal colours, was lost at airy distance in the horizon of fancy. His hearers were unable to grasp his theories, which were, indeed, too vast to be exhibited in the longest conversation; but they perceived noble images, generous suggestions, affecting pictures of virtue, which enriched their minds and nurtured their best affections. Coleridge was sometimes induced to recite portions of "Christabel," then enshrined in manuscript from eyes profane, and gave a bewitching effect to its wizard lines. But more peculiar in its beauty than this was his recitation of Kubla Khan. As he repeated the passage—

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mont Abora!

his voice seemed to mount and melt into air as the images grew more visionary, and the suggested associations more remote. He usually met opposition by conceding the point to the objector, and then went on with his high argument as if it had never been raised: thus satisfying his antagonist, himself, and all who heard him; none of whom desired to hear his discourse frittered into points, or displaced by the near encounter even of the most brilliant wits. The first time I met him, which was on one of those Wednesday evenings, we left the party together between one and two in the morning; Coleridge took my arm, and led me, nothing loath, at a very gentle pace, to his lodgings, at the Gloucester Coffee-house, pouring into my ear the whole way an argument by which he sought to reconcile the doctrines of Necessity and Free-will, winding on through a golden maze of exquisite illustration; but finding no end, except with the termination of that (to me) enchanted walk. He was only then on the threshold of the Temple of Truth, into which his genius darted its quivering and uncertain rays, but which he promised shortly to light up with unbroken lustre. "I understood a beauty in the words, but not the words:"

> "And when the stream of sound,
> Which overflow'd the soul, had pass'd away,
> A consciousness survived that it had left,
> Deposited upon the silent shore
> Of memory, images and gentle thoughts,
> Which cannot die, and will not be destroy'd."

Men of "great mark and likelihood" attended those delightful suppers, where the utmost freedom prevailed—including politicians of every grade, from Godwin up to the editor of the "New Times."

Hazlitt has alluded *con amore* to these meetings in his Essay "On the Conversation of Authors," and has reported one of the most remarkable discussions which graced them in his Essay "On Persons one would wish to have seen," published by his son, in the two volumes of his remains, which with so affectionate a care he has given to the world. In this was a fine touch of Lamb's pious feeling, breaking through his fancies and his humours, which Hazlitt has recorded, but which cannot be duly appreciated except by those who can recall to memory the suffused eye and quivering lip with which he stammered out a reference to the name which he would not utter. "There is only one other person I can ever think of after this," said he. "If Shakspeare was to come into the room, we should all rise to meet him; but if *That Person* were to come into it, we should all fall down and kiss the hem of his garment."

Among the frequent guests in Inner Temple-lane was Mr. Ayrton, the director of the music at the Italian Opera. To him Lamb addressed the following rhymed epistle on 17th May, 1817.

TO WILLIAM AYRTON, ESQ.

My dear friend,
Before I end,
Have you any
More orders for Don Giovanni,
To give
Him that doth live
Your faithful Zany?

Without raillery,
I mean Gallery
Ones:
For I am a person that shuns
All ostentation,
And being at the top of the fashion;
And seldom go to operas,
But *in formâ pauperis!*

I go to the play
In a very economical sort of a way,
Rather to see
Than be seen;
Though I'm no ill sight
Neither,
By candlelight.
And in some kinds of weather.
You might pit me
For height
Against Kean;
But in a grand tragic scene
I'm nothing:
It would create a kind of loathing
To see me act Hamlet;
There'd be many a damn let
Fly
At my presumption,
If I should try,
Being a fellow of no gumption.

By-the-way, tell me candidly how you relish
This, which they call
The lapidary style?
Opinions vary.
The late Mr. Mellish
Could never abide it;
He thought it vile,
And coxcombical.
My friend the poet-laureate,
Who is a great lawyer at
Anything comical,
Was the first who tried it;
But Mellish could never abide it;
But it signifies very little what Mellish said,
Because he is dead.

For who can confute
A body that's mute?

Or who would fight
With a senseless sprite?
Or think of troubling
An impenetrable old goblin,
That's dead and gone,
And stiff as stone,
To convince him with arguments pro and con?
As if some live logician,
Bred up at Merton,
Or Mr. Hazlitt, the metaphysician—
Hey, Mr. Ayrton!
With all your rare tone.*

For tell me how should an apparition
List to your call,
Though you talk'd for ever
Ever so clever:
When his ear itself,
By which he must hear, or not hear at all,
Is laid on the shelf?
Or put the case
(For more grace),
It were a female spectre—
How could you expect her
To take much gust
In long speeches,
With her tongue as dry as dust,
In a sandy place,
Where no peaches,
Nor lemons, nor limes, nor oranges hang,
To drop on the drought of an arid harangue,
Or quench,
With their sweet drench,
The fiery pangs which the worms inflict,
With their endless nibblings,
Like quibblings,
Which the corpse may dislike, but can ne'er contradict—
Hey, Mr. Ayrton?
With all your rare tone.

I am,
C. LAMB.

One of Lamb's most intimate friends and warmest admirers, Barron Field, disappeared from the circle on being appointed to a judicial situation in New South Wales. In the following letter to him Lamb renewed the feeling with which he had addressed Manning at the distance of a hemisphere.

TO MR. FIELD.

"My dear Barron—The bearer of this letter so far across the seas is Mr. Lawrey, who comes out to you as a missionary, and whom I have been strongly importuned to recommend to you as a most worthy creature by Mr. Fenwick, a very old, honest friend of mine; of whom, if my memory does not de-

* From this it may at first appear that the author meant to ascribe vocal talents to his friend, the director of the Italian Opera; but it is merely a "line for rhyme." For, though the public were indebted to Mr. A. for many fine foreign singers, we believe that he never claimed to be himself a singer.

ceive me, you have had some knowledge heretofore as editor of 'The Statesman,' a man of talent, and patriotic. If you can show him any facilities in his arduous undertaking, you will oblige us much. Well, and how does the land of thieves use you? and how do you pass your time in your extra-judicial intervals? Going about the streets with a lantern, like Diogenes, looking for an honest man? You may look long enough, I fancy. Do give me some notion of the manners of the inhabitants where you are. They don't thieve all day long, do they? No human property could stand such continuous battery. And what do they do when they ain't stealing?

"Have you got a theatre? What pieces are performed? Shakspeare's, I suppose; not so much for the poetry as for his having once been in danger of leaving his country on account of certain 'small deer.'

"Have you poets among you? Cursed plagiarists, I fancy, if you have any. I would not trust an idea or a pocket-handkerchief of mine among 'em. You are almost competent to answer Lord Bacon's problem, whether a nation of atheists can subsist together. You are practically in one:

> 'So thievish 'tis, that the Eighth Commandment itself
> Scarce seemeth there to be.'

Our old honest world goes on with little perceptible variation. Of course you have heard of poor ——'s death, and that G. D. is one of Lord Stanhope's residuaries. I am afraid he has not touched much of the residue yet. B—— is going to Demerara or Essequibo, I am not quite certain which. A—— is turned actor. He came out in genteel comedy at Cheltenham this season, and has hopes of a London engagement.

"For my own history, I am just in the same spot, doing the same thing (videlicet, little or nothing) as when you left me; only I have positive hopes that I shall be able to conquer that inveterate habit of smoking which you may remember I indulged in. I think of making a beginning this evening, viz., Sunday, 31st Aug., 1817, not Wednesday, the 2d Feb., 1818, as it will be, perhaps, when you read this for the first time. There is the difficulty of writing from one end of the globe (hemispheres I call 'em) to another. Why, half the truths I have sent you in this letter will become lies before they reach you, and some of the lies (which I have mixed for variety's sake, and to exercise your judgment in the finding of them out) may be turned into sad realities before you shall be called upon to detect them. Such are the defects of going by different chronologies. Your now is not my now; and, again, your then is not my then; but my now may be your then, and vice versâ. Whose head is competent to these things?

"How does Mrs. Field get on in her geography? Does she know where she is by this time? I am not sure sometimes you are not in another planet: but then I don't like to ask Capt. Burney, or any of those that know anything about it, for fear of exposing my ignorance.

"Our kindest remembrances, however, to Mrs. F., if she will accept of reminiscences from another planet, or at least another hemisphere."

Lamb's intention of spending the rest of his days in the Middle Temple was not to be realized. The inconveniences of being in chambers began to be felt as he and his sister grew older, and in the autumn of this year they removed to lodgings in Russell-street, Covent Garden, the corner house, delightfully situated between the two great theatres. In November, 1817, Miss Lamb announced the removal to Miss Wordsworth in a letter, to which Lamb added the following:

TO MISS WORDSWORTH.

"Dear Miss Wordsworth—Here we are transplanted from our native soil. I thought we never could have been torn up from the Temple. Indeed, it was an ugly wrench, but like a tooth, now 'tis out, and I am easy. We never can strike root so deep in any other ground. This where we are is a light bit of gardener's mould, and if they take us up from it it will cost no blood and groans, like mandrakes pulled up. We are in the individual spot I like best in all this great city. The theatres, with all their noises. Covent Garden, dearer to me than any gardens of Alcinous, where we are morally sure of the earliest peas and 'sparagus. Bow-street, where the thieves are examined, within a few yards of us. Mary had not been here four-and-twenty hours before she saw a thief. She sits at the window working; and casually throwing out her eyes, she sees a concourse of people coming this way, with a constable to conduct the solemnity. These incidents agreeably diversify a female life.

* * * * * *

"Mary has brought her part of this letter to an orthodox and loving conclusion, which is very well, for I have no room for pansies and remembrances. What a nice holyday I got on Wednesday by favour of a princess dying!

"C. L."

CHAPTER XI.

[1818 to 1820.]

Letters to Mrs. Wordsworth, Southey, Manning, and Coleridge.

LAMB, now in the immediate neighbourhood of the theatres, renewed the dramatic associations of his youth, which the failure of one experiment had not chilled. Although he rather loved to dwell on the recollections of the actors who had passed from the stage than to mingle with the happy crowds who hailed the successive triumphs of Mr. Kean, he formed some new and steady theatrical attachments. His chief favourites of this time were Miss Kelly, Miss Burrell of the Olympic, and Munden. The first, then the sole support of the English Opera, became a frequent guest in Great Russel-street, and charmed the circle there by the heartiness of her manners, the delicacy and gentleness of her remarks, and her unaffected sensibility, as much as she had done on the stage. Miss Burrell, a lady of more limited powers, but with a frank and noble style, was discovered by Lamb on one of the visits which he paid, on the invitation of his old friend Elliston, to the Olympic, where the lady performed the hero of that happy parody of Moncrieff's, Giovanni in London. To her Lamb devoted a little article, which he sent to the Examiner, in which he thus addresses her: "But Giovanni, free, fine, frank-spirited, single-hearted creature, turning all the mischief into fun as harmless as toys, or children's *make believe*, what praise can we repay to you adequate to the pleasure which you have given us? We had better be silent, for you have no name, and our mention will but be thought fantastical. You have taken out the sting from the evil thing, by what magic we know not, for there are actresses of greater merit and likelihood than you. With you and your Giovanni our spirits will hold communion, whenever sorrow or suffering shall be our lot. We have seen you triumph over the infernal powers; and pain and Erebus, and the powers of darkness, are shapes of a dream." Miss Burrell soon married a person named Gold, and disappeared from the stage. To Munden in prose, and Miss Kelly in verse, Lamb has done ample justice.

Lamb's increasing celebrity and universal kindness rapidly

increased the number of his visiters. He thus complained, in wayward mood, of them to Mrs. Wordsworth :—

TO MRS. WORDSWORTH.

"East India House, 18th Feb., 1818.

"My dear Mrs. Wordsworth—I have repeatedly taken pen in hand to answer your kind letter. My sister should more properly have done it, but she having failed, I consider myself answerable for her debts. I am now trying to do it in the midst of commercial noises, and with a quill which seems more ready to glide into arithmetical figures and names of gourds, cassia, cardemoms, aloes, ginger, or tea, than into kindly responses and friendly recollections. The reason why I cannot write letters at home is, that I am never alone. Plato's—(I write to W. W. now)—Plato's double-animal parted never longed more to be reciprocally reunited in the system of its first creation, than I sometimes do to be but for a moment single and separate. Except my morning's walk to the office, which is like treading on sands of gold for that reason, I am never so. I cannot walk home from office but some officious friend offers his unwelcome courtesies to accompany me. All the morning I am pestered. I could sit and gravely cast up sums in great books, or compare sum with sum, and write 'paid' against this, and 'unpaid' against t'other, and yet reserve in some corner of my mind 'some darling thoughts all my own'—faint memory of some passage in a book, or the tone of an absent friend's voice—a snatch of Miss Burrell's singing, or a gleam of Fanny Kelly's divine plain face. The two operations might be going on at the same time without thwarting, as the sun's two motions (earth's, I mean), or, as I sometimes turn round till I am giddy in my back parlour, while my sister is walking longitudinally in the front; or, as the shoulder of veal twists round with the spit, while the smoke wreathes up the chimney. But there are a set of amateurs of the Belles Lettres—the gay science—who come to me as a sort of rendezvous, putting questions of criticism, of British Institutions, Lalla Rookhs, &c.—what Coleridge said at the lecture last night—who have the form of reading men, but, for any possible use reading can be to them but to talk of, might as well have been Ante-Cadmeans born, or have lain sucking out the sense of an Egyptian hieroglyph as long as the pyramids will last before they should find it. These pests worrit me at business and in all its intervals, perplexing my accounts, poisoning my little salutary warming-time at the fire, puzzling my paragraphs if I take a newspaper, cramming in between my own free thoughts and a column of

figures which had come to an amicable compromise but for them. Their noise ended, one of them, as I said, accompanies me home, lest I should be solitary for a moment; he at length takes his welcome leave at the door; up I go, mutton on table, hungry as hunter, hope to forget my cares, and bury them in the agreeable abstraction of mastication; knock at the door, in comes Mrs. ——, or M——, or Demi-gorgon, or my brother, or somebody, to prevent my eating alone—a process absolutely necessary to my poor wretched digestion. Oh, the pleasure of eating alone! eating my dinner alone! let me think of it. But in they come, and make it absolutely necessary that I should open a bottle of orange—for my meat turns into stone when any one dines with me if I have not wine. Wine can mollify stones; then *that* wine turns into acidity, acerbity, misanthropy, a hatred of my interrupters (God bless 'em! I love some of 'em dearly), and, with the hatred, a still greater aversion to their going away. Bad is the dead sea they bring upon me, choking and deadening, but worse is the deader dry sand they leave me on if they go before bedtime. Come never, I would say to these spoilers of my dinner; but, if you come, never go! The fact is, this interruption does not happen very often, but every time it comes by surprise, that present bane of my life, orange wine, with all its dreary stifling consequences, follows. Evening company I should always like had I any mornings, but I am saturated with human faces (*divine* forsooth!) and voices all the golden morning; and five evenings in a week would be as much as I should covet to be in company, but I assure you that is a wonderful week in which I can get two, or one to myself. I am never C. L., but always C. L. & Co. He who thought it not good for man to be alone, preserve me from the more prodigious monstrosity of being never by myself. I forget bedtime, but even there these sociable frogs clamber up to annoy me. Once a week, generally some singular evening that! being alone, I go to bed at the hour I ought always to be abed; just close to my bedroom window is the clubroom of a public house, where a set of singers, I take them to be chorus singers of the two theatres (it must be *both of them*), begin their orgies. They are a set of fellows (as I conceive) who, being limited by their talents to the burden of the song at the playhouses, in revenge, have got the common popular airs by Bishop, or some cheap composer, arranged for choruses, that is, to be sung all in chorus. At least, I never can catch any of the text of the plain song, nothing but the Babylonish choral howl at the tail on't. 'That fury being quench'd'—the howl, I mean—a burden succeeds of shouts and clapping

and knocking of the table. At length overtasked nature drops under it, and escapes for a few hours into the society of the sweet silent creatures of dreams, which go away with mocks and mows at cockcrow. And then I think of the words Christabel's father used (bless me, I have dipped in the wrong ink) to say every morning by way of variety when he awoke:

'Every knell the Baron saith,
Wakes us up to a world of death'—

or something like it. All I mean by this senseless interrupted tale is, that, by my central situation, I am a little over-companied. Not that I have any animosity against the good creatures that are so anxious to drive away the happy solitude from me. I like 'em, and cards, and a cheerful glass, but I mean merely to give you an idea between office confinement and after-office society, how little time I can call my own. I mean only to draw a picture, not to make an inference. I would not, that I know of, have it otherwise. I only wish sometimes I could exchange some of my faces and voices for the faces and voices which a late visitation brought most welcome, and carried away, leaving regret but more pleasure, even a kind of gratitude, at being so often favoured with that kind northern visitation. My London faces and noises don't hear me—I mean no disrespect, or I should explain myself, that, instead of their return two hundred and twenty times a year, and the return of W. W., &c., seven times in one hundred and four weeks, some more equal distribution might be found. I have scarce room to put in Mary's kind love, and my poor name,

"C. LAMB.

"—— goes on lecturing. I mean to hear some of the course, but lectures are not much to my taste, whatever the lecturer may be. If *read*, they are dismal flat, and you can't think why you are brought together to hear a man read his works, which you could read so much better at leisure yourself; if delivered extempore, I am always in pain, lest the gift of utterance should suddenly fail the orator in the middle, as it did me at the dinner given in honour of me at the London Tavern. 'Gentlemen,' said I, and there I stopped; the rest my feelings were under the necessity of supplying. Mrs. Wordsworth *will* go on, kindly haunting us with visions of seeing the lakes once more, which never can be realized. Between us there is a great gulf, not of inexplicable moral antipathies and distances, I hope, as there seemed to be between me and that gentleman concerned in the stamp-office, that I so strangely recoiled from at Haydon's. I think I had

an instinct that he was the head of an office. I hate all such people—accountants' deputy accountants. The dear abstract notion of the East India Company, as long as she is unseen, is pretty, rather poetical; but, as she makes herself manifest by the persons of such beasts, I loathe and detest her as the scarlet what-do-you-call-her of Babylon. I thought, after abridging us of all our red-letter days, they had done their worst, but I was deceived in the length to which heads of offices, those true liberty-haters, can go. They are the tyrants, not Ferdinand, nor Nero; by a decree passed this week, they have abridged us of the immemorially-observed custom of going at one o'clock of a Saturday, the little shadow of a holyday left us. Dear W. W., be thankful for liberty."

Among Lamb's new acquaintances was Mr. Charles Ollier, a young bookseller of considerable literary talent, which he has since exhibited in the original and beautiful tale of "Inesilla," who proposed to him the publication of his scattered writings in a collected form. Lamb acceded; and nearly all he had then written in prose and verse were published this year by Mr. Ollier and his brother, in two small and elegant volumes. Early copies were despatched to Southey and Wordsworth; the acknowledgments of the former of whom produced a reply, from which the following is an extract:—

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"Monday, Oct. 26, 1818.

"Dear Southey—I am pleased with your friendly remembrances of my little things. I do not know whether I have done a silly thing or a wise one, but it is of no great consequence. I run no risk, and care for no censures. My bread and cheese is stable as the foundations of Leadenhall-street, and, if it hold out as long as the 'foundations of our empire in the East,' I shall do pretty well. You and W. W. should have had your presentation copies more ceremoniously sent, but I had no copies when I was leaving town for my holydays, and, rather than delay, commissioned my bookseller to send them thus nakedly. By not hearing from W. W. or you, I began to be afraid Murray had not sent them. I do not see S. T. C. so often as I could wish. I am *better than I deserve* to be. The hot weather has been such a treat! Mary joins in this little corner in kindest remembrance to you all.

"C. L."

Lamb's interest was strongly excited for Mr. Kenney on the production of his comedy, entitled "*A Word to the La-*

dies." Lamb had engaged to contribute the prologue; but the promise pressed hard upon him, and he procured the requisite quantity of verse from a very inferior hand. Kenney, who had married Holcroft's widow, had more than succeeded to him in Lamb's regards. Holcroft had considerable dramatic skill; great force and earnestness of style, and noble sincerity and uprightness of disposition; but he was an austere observer of morals and manners, and even his grotesque characters were hardly and painfully sculptured; while Kenney with as fine a perception of the ludicrous and the peculiar was more airy, more indulgent, more graceful, and exhibited more frequent glimpses of "the gayest, happiest attitude of things." The comedy met with less success than the reputation of the author and brilliant experience of the past had rendered probable, and Lamb had to perform the office of comforter, as he had done on the more unlucky event to Godwin. To this play Lamb refers in the following note to Coleridge, who was contemplating a course of lectures on Shakspeare, and who sent Lamb a ticket with sad forebodings that the course would be his last.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"My dear Coleridge—I have been in a state of incessant hurry ever since the receipt of your ticket. It found me incapable of attending you, it being the night of Kenney's new comedy. You know my local aptitudes at such a time; I have been a thorough rendezvous for all consultations; my head begins to clear up a little, but it has had bells in it. Thank you kindly for your ticket, though the mournful prognostic which accompanies it certainly renders its permanent pretensions less marketable; but I trust to hear many a course yet. You excepted Christmas week, by which I understood *next week;* I thought Christmas week was that which Christmas Sunday ushered in. We are sorry it never lies in your way to come to us; but, dear Mohammed, we will come to you. Will it be convenient to all the good people at Highgate if we take a stage up, *not next Sunday*, but the following, viz., 3d January, 1819—shall we be too late to catch a skirt of the old outgoer? how the years crumble from under us! We shall hope to see you before then; but, if not, let us know if *then* will be convenient. Can we secure a coach home?

"Believe me ever yours,

"C. LAMB.

"I have but one holyday, which is Christmas day itself nakedly, no pretty garnish and fringes of St. John's day, Holy Innocents', &c., that used to bestud it all around in the cal-

endar. *Improbe labor!* I write six hours every day in this candlelight fog-den at Leadenhall."

In the next year [1819] Lamb was greatly pleased by the dedication to him of Wordsworth's poem of "The Wagoner," which Wordsworth had read to him in MS. thirteen years before. On receipt of the little volume Lamb acknowledged it as follows.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"My dear Wordsworth—You cannot imagine how proud we are here of the dedication. We read it twice for once that we do the poem. I mean all through; yet 'Benjamin' is no common favourite; there is a spirit of beautiful tolerance in it; it is as good as it was in 1806; and will be as good in 1829, if our dim eyes shall be awake to peruse it. Methinks there is a kind of shadowing affinity between the subject of the narrative and the subject of the dedication; but I will not enter into personal themes, else, substituting ******* **** for Ben, and the Honourable United Company of Merchants, trading to the East Indies, for the master of the misused team, it might seem, by no far-fetched analogy, to point its dim warnings hitherward; but I reject the omen, especially as its import seems to have been diverted to another victim.

"I will never write another letter with alternate inks. You cannot imagine how it cramps the flow of the style. I can conceive Pindar (I do not mean to compare myself to *him*), by the command of Hiero, the Sicilian tyrant (was not he the tyrant of some place? fy on my neglect of history)—I can conceive him, by command of Hiero or Perillus, set down to pen an Isthmian or Nemean panegyric in lines, alternate red and black. I maintain he couldn't have done it; it would have been a strait-laced torture to his muse; he would have called for the bull for a relief. Neither could Lycidas nor the Chorics (how do you like the word?) of Samson Agonistes have been written with two inks. Your couplets with points, epilogues to Mr. H.'s, &c., might be even benefited by the twy-fount, where one line (the second) is for point, and the first for rhyme. I think the alternation would assist, like a mould. I maintain it, you could not have written your stanzas on pre-existence with two inks. Try another; and Rogers, with his silver standish, having one ink only, I will bet my 'Ode on Tobacco' against the 'Pleasures of Memory'—and 'Hope,' too, shall put more fervour of enthusiasm into the same subject than you can with your two; he shall do it *stans pede in uno*, as it were.

"The 'Wagoner' is very ill put up in boards, at least it seems to me always to open at the dedication; but that is a mechanical fault. I reread the 'White Doe of Rylstone;' the title should be always written at length, as Mary Sabilla N——, a very nice woman of our acquaintance, always signs hers at the bottom of the shortest note. Mary told her, if her name had been Mary Ann, she would have signed M. A. N——, or M. only, dropping the A., which makes me think, with some other trifles, that she understands something of human nature. My pen goes galloping on most rhapsodically, glad to have escaped the bondage of two inks.

"Manning had just sent it home, and it came as fresh to me as the immortal creature it speaks of. M. sent it home with a note, having this passage in it: 'I cannot help writing to you while I am reading Wordsworth's poem. I have got into the third canto, and say that it raises my opinion of him very much indeed.* 'Tis broad, noble, poetical, with a masterly scanning of human actions, absolutely above common readers. What a manly (implied) interpretation of (bad) party-actions, as trampling the Bible, &c.,' and so he goes on.

"I do not know which I like best, the prologue (the latter part especially) to P. Bell, or the epilogue to Benjamin. Yes, I tell stories; I do know I like the last best; and the 'Wagoner' altogether is a pleasanter remembrance to me than the 'Itinerant.' If it were not, the page before the first page would and ought to make it so.

"If, as you say, the 'Wagoner,' in some sort, came at my call, oh for a potent voice to call forth the 'Recluse' from his profound dormitory, where he sleeps forgetful of his foolish charge—the world.

"Had I three inks, I would invoke him! Talfourd has written a most kind review of J. Woodvil, &c., in the 'Champion.' He is your most zealous admirer, in solitude and in crowds. H. Crabbe Robinson gives me any dear prints that I happen to admire, and I love him for it and for other things. Alsager shall have his copy, but at present I have lent it *for a day only*, not choosing to part with my own. Mary's love How do you all do, amanuenses both—marital and sororal?

"C. LAMB"

The next letter which remains is addressed to Manning (returned to England, and domiciled in Hertfordshire), in the spring of 1819.

* "N.B.—M., from his peregrinations, is twelve or fourteen years *behind* in his knowledge of who has or has not written good verse of late."

TO MR. MANNING.

"My dear M.—I want to know how your brother is, if you have heard lately. I want to know about you. I wish you were nearer. How are my cousins, the Gladmans, of Wheathamstead, and farmer Bruton? Mrs. Bruton is a glorious woman.

"Hail, Mackery End."

This is a fragment of a blank verse poem which I once meditated, but got no further.* The E. I. H. has been thrown into a quandary by the strange phenomenon of poor —— ——, whom I have known man and madman twenty-seven years, he being elder here than myself by nine years and more. He was always a pleasant, gossiping, half-headed, muzzy, dozing, dreaming, walk-about, inoffensive chap; a little too fond of the creature; who isn't at times? but —— had not brains to work off an overnight's surfeit by ten o'clock next morning, and, unfortunately, in he wandered the other morning drunk with last night, and with a superfetation of drink taken in since he set out from bed. He came staggering under his double burden, like trees in Java, bearing at once blossom, fruit, and falling fruit, as I have heard you or some other traveller tell, with his face literally as blue as the bluest firmament; some wretched calico that he had mopped his poor oozy front with had rendered up its native die, and the devil a bit would he consent to wash it, but swore it was characteristic, for he was going to the sale of indigo, and set up a laugh which I did not think the lungs of mortal man were competent to. It was like a thousand people laughing, or the Goblin Page. He imagined afterward that the whole office had been laughing at him, so strange did his own sounds strike upon his *non*sensorium. But —— has laughed his last laugh, and awoke the next day to find himself reduced from an abused income of 600*l.* per annum to one sixth of the sum, after thirty-six years' tolerably good service. The quality of mercy was not strained in his behalf; the gentle dews dropped not on him from heaven. It just came across me that I was writing to Canton. Will you drop in tomorrow night? Fanny Kelly is coming, if she does not cheat us. Mrs. *Gold* is well, but proves 'uncoin'd,' as the lovers about Wheathamstead would say.

"I have not had such a quiet half hour to sit down to a quiet letter for many years. I have not been interrupted

* See "Mackery End, in Hertfordshire," vol. ii., p. 91, for a charming account of a visit to their cousin in the country with Mr. Barron Field.

above four times. I wrote a letter the other day in alternate lines, black ink and red, and you cannot think how it chilled the flow of ideas. Next Monday is Whit-Monday. What a reflection! Twelve years ago, and I should have kept that and the following holyday in the fields a Maying. All of those pretty pastoral delights are over. This dead, everlasting dead desk—how it weighs the spirit of a gentleman down! This dead wood of the desk, instead of your living trees! But then, again, I hate the Joskins, *a name for Hertfordshire bumpkins*. Each state of life has its inconvenience; but then, again, mine has more than one. Not that I repine, or grudge, or murmur at my destiny. I have meat and drink, and decent apparel; I shall, at least, when I get a new hat.

"A redhaired man just interrupted me. He has broke the current of my thoughts. I haven't a word to add. I don't know why I send this letter, but I have had a hankering to hear about you some days. Perhaps it will go off before your reply comes. If it don't, I assure you no letter was ever welcomer from you, from Paris or Macao.

"C. LAMB."

The following letter, dated 25th November, 1819, is addressed to Miss Wordsworth, on Wordsworth's youngest son visiting Lamb in London

TO MISS WORDSWORTH.

"Dear Miss Wordsworth—You will think me negligent; but I wanted to see more of William before I ventured to express a prediction. Till yesterday I had barely seen him—*Virgilium tantum vidi*—but yesterday he gave us his small company to a bullock's heart, and I can pronounce him a lad of promise. He is no pedant nor bookworm; so far I can answer. Perhaps he has, hitherto, paid too little attention to other men's inventions, preferring, like Lord Foppington, the natural sprouts of his own.' But he has observation, and seems thoroughly awake. I am ill at remembering other people's *bons mots*, but the following are a few:—Being taken over Waterloo Bridge, he remarked, that if we had no mountains, we had a fine river at least; which was a touch of the comparative: but then he added, in a strain which augured less for his future abilities as a political economist, that he supposed they must take at least a pound a week toll. Like a curious naturalist, he inquired if the tide did not come up a little salty. This being satisfactorily answered, he put another question, as to the flux and reflux; which, being rather cunningly evaded than artfully solved by that she-Aristotle,

Mary, who muttered something about its getting up an hour sooner and sooner every day, he sagely replied, 'Then it must come to the same thing at last;' which was a speech worthy of an infant Halley! The lion in the 'Change by no means came up to his ideal standard; so impossible is it for Nature, in any of her works, to come up to the standard of a child's imagination! The whelps (lionets) he was sorry to find were dead; and, on particular inquiry, his old friend the ourang-outang had gone the way of all flesh also. The grand tiger was also sick, and expected in no short time to exchange this transitory world for another, or none. But, again, there was a golden eagle (I do not mean that of Charing) which did much arride and console him. William's genius, I take it, leans a little to the figurative; for, being at play at tricktrack (a kind of minor billiard-table which we keep for smaller wights, and sometimes refresh our own mature fatigues with taking a hand at), not being able to hit a ball he had iterate aimed at, he cried out, 'I cannot hit that beast.' Now the balls are usually called men, but he felicitously hit upon a middle term; a term of approximation and imaginative reconciliation; a something where the two ends of the brute matter (ivory), and their human and rather violent personification into men, might meet, as I take it, illustrative of that excellent remark, in a certain preface about imagination, explaining 'Like a seabeast that had crawled forth to sun himself.' Not that I accuse William Minor of hereditary plagiary, or conceive the image to have come from the paternal store. Rather he seemeth to keep aloof from any source of imitation, and purposely to remain ignorant of what mighty poets have done in this kind before him; for, being asked if his father had ever been on Westminster Bridge, he answered that he did not know!

"It is hard to discern the oak in the acorn, or a temple like St. Paul's in the first stone which is laid; nor can I quite prefigure what destination the genius of William Minor hath to take. Some few hints I have set down to guide my future observations. He hath the power of calculation in no ordinary degree for a chit. He combineth figures, after the first boggle, rapidly; as in the tricktrack board, where the hits are figured, at first he did perceive that 15 and 7 made 22, but by a little use he could combine 8 with 25, and 33 again with 16, which approacheth something in kind (far let me be from flattering him by saying in degree) to that of the famous American boy. I am sometimes inclined to think I perceive the future satirist in him, for he hath a sub-sardonic smile which bursteth out upon occasion; as when he was asked if

London were as big as Ambleside; and, indeed, no other answer was given or proper to be given to so ensnaring and provoking a question. In the contour of scull, certainly, I discern something paternal. But whether in all respects the future man shall transcend his father's fame, Time, the trier of Geniuses, must decide. Be it pronounced peremptorily at present that William is a well-mannered child, and, though no great student, hath yet a lively eye for things that lie before him.

"Given in haste from my desk at Leadenhall.

"Yours, and yours most sincerely,

"C. LAMB."

CHAPTER XII.

[1820 to 1823.]

Letters to Wordsworth, Coleridge, Field, Wilson, and Barton.

THE widening circle of Lamb's literary friends now embraced additional authors and actors—famous, or just bursting into fame. He welcomed in the author of the "Dramatic Scenes," who chose to appear in print as Barry Cornwall, a spirit most congenial with his own in its serious moods—one whose genius he had assisted to impel towards its kindred models, the great dramatists of Elizabeth's time, and in whose success he received the first and best reward of the efforts he had made to inspire a taste for these old masters of humanity. Mr. Macready, who had just emancipated himself from the drudgery of representing the villains of tragedy, by his splendid performance of *Richard*, was introduced to him by his old friend Charles Lloyd, who had visited London for change of scene, under great depression of spirits. Lloyd owed a debt of gratitude to Macready, which exemplified the true uses of the acted drama with a force which it would take many sermons of its stoutest opponents to reason away. A deep gloom had gradually overcast his mind, and threatened wholly to encircle it, when he was induced to look in at Covent Garden Theatre, and see the performance of *Rob Roy* The picture which he then beheld of the generous outlaw—the frank, gallant, noble bearing—the air and movements, as of one "free of mountain solitudes"—the touches of manly pathos and irresistible cordiality, delighted and melted him, won him from his painful introspections, and brought to him

the unwonted relief of tears. He went home "a *gayer* and a wiser man;" returned again to the theatre whenever the healing enjoyments could be renewed there; and sought the acquaintance of the actor who had broken the melancholy spell in which he was enthralled, and had restored the pulses of his nature to their healthful beatings. The year 1820 gave Lamb an interest in Macready beyond that which he had derived from the introduction of Lloyd, arising from the power with which he animated the first production of one of his oldest friends—"Virginius." Knowles had been a friend and disciple of Hazlitt from a boy; and Lamb had liked and esteemed him as a hearty companion; but he had not guessed at the extraordinary dramatic power which lay ready for kindling in his brain, and still less at the delicacy of tact with which he had unveiled the sources of the most profound affections. Lamb had almost lost his taste for acted tragedy, as the sad realities of life had pressed more nearly on him; yet he made an exception in favour of the first and happiest part of "Virginius," those paternal scenes which stand alone in the modern drama, and which Macready informed with the fulness of a father's affection.

The establishment of the "London Magazine," under the auspices of Mr. John Scott, occasioned Lamb's introduction to the public by the name, under colour of which he acquired his most brilliant reputation—"Elia." The adoption of this signature was purely accidental. His first contribution to the magazine was a description of the Old South Sea House, where Lamb had passed a few months' novitiate as a clerk thirty years before, and of its inmates who had long passed away; and remembering the name of a gay, light-hearted foreigner, who fluttered there at that time, he subscribed his name to the essay. It was afterward affixed to subsequent contributions and Lamb used it until, in his "Last Essays of Elia," he bade it a sad farewell.

The perpetual influx of visiters whom he could not repel, whom, indeed, he was always glad to welcome, but whose visits unstrung him, induced him to take lodgings at Dalston, to which he occasionally retired when he wished for repose. The deaths of some who were dear to him cast a melancholy tinge on his mind, as may be seen in the following:—

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"20th March, 1822.

"My dear Wordsworth—A letter from you is very grateful; I have not seen a Kendal postmark so long! We are pretty well, save colds and rheumatics, and a certain deadness to every-

thing, which, I think, I may date from poor John's loss, and another accident or two at the same time, that has made me almost bury myself at Dalston, where yet I see more faces than I could wish. Deaths overset one, and put one out long after the recent grief. Two or three have died within this last two twelvemonths, and so many parts of me have been numbed. One sees a picture, reads an anecdote, starts a casual fancy, and thinks to tell of it to this person in preference to every other: the person is gone whom it would have peculiarly suited. It won't do for another. Every departure destroys a class of sympathies. There's Captain Burney gone! What fun has whist now? what matters it what you lead, if you can no longer fancy him looking over you? One never hears anything, but the image of the particular person occurs with whom alone almost you would care to share the intelligence—thus one distributes one's self about—and now for so many parts of me I have lost the market. Common natures do not suffice me. Good people, as they are called, won't serve. I want individuals. I am made up of queer points, and I want so many answering needles. The going away of friends does not make the remainder more precious. It takes so much from them as there was a common link. A. B. and C. make a party. A. dies. B. not only loses A., but all A.'s part in C. C. loses A.'s part in B., and so the alphabet sickens by subtraction of interchangeables. I express myself muddily, *capite dolente*. I have a dulling cold. My theory is to enjoy life, but my practice is against it. I grow ominously tired of official confinement. Thirty years have I served the Philistines, and my neck is not subdued to the yoke. You don't know how wearisome it is to breathe the air of four pent walls, without relief, day after day, all the golden hours of the day between ten and four, without ease or interposition. *Tædet me harum quotidianarum formarum*, these pestilential clerk-faces always in one's dish. Oh for a few years between the grave and the desk! they are the same, save that at the latter you are the outside machine. The foul enchanter ——, 'letters four do form his name'—Busirare is his name in hell—that has curtailed you of some domestic comforts, hath laid a heavier hand on me, not in present infliction, but in the taking away the hope of enfranchisement. I dare not whisper to myself a pension on this side of absolute incapacitation and infirmity, till years have sucked me dry; *Otium cum indignitate*. I had thought, in a green old age (oh green thought!), to have retired to Ponder's End, emblematic name, how beautiful! in the Ware road, there to have made up my accounts with Heaven and the company, toddling about between it and Cheshunt, anon stretching on some fine

Izaac Walton morning to Hoddesdon or Amwell, careless as a beggar; but walking, walking ever till I fairly walked myself off my legs, dying walking! The hope is gone. I sit like Philomel all day (but not singing), with my breast against this thorn of a desk, with the only hope that some pulmonary affliction may relieve me. *Vide* Lord Palmerston's report of the clerks in the war-office (Debates this morning's 'Times'), by which it appears, in twenty years as many clerks have been coughed and catarrhed out of it into their freer graves. Thank you for asking about the pictures. Milton hangs over my fireside in Covent Garden (when I am there), the rest have been sold for an old song, wanting the eloquent tongue that should have set them off! You have gratified me with liking my meeting with Dodd.* For the Malvolio story, the thing is become in verity a sad task, and I eke it out with anything. If I could slip out of it I should be happy, but our chief reputed assistants have forsaken us. The Opium-eater crossed us once with a dazzling path, and hath as suddenly left us darkling; and, in short, I shall go on from dull to worse, because I cannot resist the booksellers' importunity—the old plea, you know, of authors; but, I believe, on my part, sincere. Hartley I do not so often see, but I never see him in unwelcome hour. I thoroughly love and honour him. I send you a frozen epistle, but it is winter and dead time of the year with me. May Heaven keep something like spring and summer up with you, strengthen your eyes, and make mine a little lighter to encounter with them, as I hope they shall yet and again before all are closed.

"Yours, with every kind remembrance,

"C. L.

"I had almost forgot to say I think you thoroughly right about presentation copies. I should like to see you print a book I should grudge to purchase for its size. Hang me, but I would have it, though!"

The following letter, containing the germe of the well-known "Dissertation on Roast Pig," was addressed to Coleridge, who had received a pig as a present, and attributed it erroneously to Lamb.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Dear C.—It gives me great satisfaction to hear that the pig turned out so well—they are interesting creatures at a

* See the account of the meeting between Dodd and Jem White, in Elia' Essay "On some of the Old Actors," vol. ii., p. 151.

certain age—what a pity such buds should blow out into the maturity of rank bacon! You had all some of the crackling—and brain sauce—did you remember to rub it with butter, and gently dredge it a little, just before the crisis? Did the eyes come away kindly, with no Œdipean avulsion? Was the crackling the colour of the ripe pomegranate? Had you no cursed compliment of boiled neck of mutton before it, to blunt the edge of delicate desire? Did you flesh maiden teeth in it? Not that I sent the pig, nor can form the remotest guess what part O—— could play in the business. I never knew him give anything away in my life. He would not begin with strangers. I suspect the pig, after all, was meant for me; but, at the unlucky juncture of time being absent, the present somehow went round to Highgate. To confess an honest truth, a pig is one of those things I could never think of sending away. Teals, widgeons, snipes, barn-door fowl, ducks, geese—your tame villalio things—Welsh mutton, collars of brawn, sturgeon, fresh or pickled, your potted char, Swiss cheeses, French pies, early grapes, muscadines, I impart as freely unto my friends as to myself. They are but self-extended; but pardon me if I stop somewhere—where the fine feeling of benevolence giveth a higher smack than the sensual rarity, there my friends (or any good man) may command me; but pigs are pigs, and I myself therein am nearest to myself. Nay, I should think it an affront, an undervaluing done to Nature who bestowed such a boon upon me, if, in a churlish mood, I parted with the precious gift. One of the bitterest pangs I ever felt of remorse was when a child—my kind old aunt had strained her pocket-strings to bestow a sixpenny whole plumcake upon me. In my way home through the borough I met a venerable old man, not a mendicant, but thereabout; a look-beggar, not a verbal petitionist; and in the coxcombry of taught-charity I gave away the cake to him. I walked on a little in all the pride of an evangelical peacock, when, of a sudden, my old aunt's kindness crossed me; the sum it was to her; the pleasure she had a right to expect that I, not the old impostor, should take in eating her cake; the cursed ingratitude by which, under the colour of a Christian virtue, I had frustrated her cherished purpose. I sobbed, wept, and took it to heart so grievously, that I think I never suffered the like—and I was right. It was a piece of unfeeling hypocrisy, and proved a lesson to me ever after. The cake has long been masticated, consigned to dunghill with the ashes of that unseasonable pauper.

"But when Providence, who is better to us all than our aunts, gives me a pig, remembering my temptation and my

fall, I shall endeavour to act towards it more in the spirit the donor's purpose.

"Yours (short of pig) to command in everything,

"C. L.

In the summer of 1822 Lamb and his sister visited Paris. The following is a hasty letter addressed to Field on his return.

TO MR. BARRON FIELD.

"My dear F.—I scribble hastily at office. Frank wants my letter presently. I and sister are just returned from Paris!! We have eaten frogs. It has been such a treat! Frogs are the nicest little delicate things—rabbity-flavoured! Imagine a Lilliputian rabbit! They fricassee them; but, in my mind, dressed, seethed, plain, with parsley and butter, would have been the decision of Apicius. Paris is a glorious, picturesque old city. London looks mean and new to it, as the town of Washington would seen after it. But they have no St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey. The Seine, so much despised by Cockneys, is exactly the size to run through a magnificent street; palaces a mile long on one side, lofty Edinbro' stone (oh the glorious antiquities!) houses on the other. The Thames disunites London and Southwark. I had Talma to supper with me. He has picked up, as I believe, an authentic portrait of Shakspeare. He paid a broker about 40*l.* English for it. It is painted on the one half of a pair of bellows—a lovely picture, corresponding with the folio head. The bellows has old carved *wings* round it, and round the visnomy is inscribed, as near as I remember, not divided into rhyme—I found out the rhyme—

Whom have we here
Stuck on this bellows
But the prince of good fellows,
Willy Shakspeare?

At top—

Oh base and coward luck!
To be here stuck.

POINS.

At bottom—

Nay! rather a glorious lot is to him assign'd,
Who, like the Almighty, rides upon the *wind*.

ISTOL.

"This is all in old carved wooden letters. The countenance smiling, sweet, and intellectual beyond measure, even as he was immeasurable. It may be a forgery. They laugh

at me, and tell me Ireland is in Paris, and has been putting off a portrait of the Black Prince. How far old wood may be imitated I cannot say. Ireland was not found out by his parchments, but by his poetry. I am confident no painter on either side the channel could have painted anything near like the face I saw. Again, would such a painter and forger have taken 40*l.* for a thing, if authentic, worth 4000*l.*? Talma is not in the secret, for he had not even found out the rhymes in the first inscription. He is coming over with it, and, my life to Southey's Thalaba, it will gain universal faith.

"The letter is wanted, and I am wanted. Imagine the blank filled up with all kind things.

"Our joint hearty remembrances to both of you. Yours, as ever,

"C. LAMB.

"Sept. 22, 1822."

Soon after Lamb's return from Paris he became acquainted with the poet of the Quakers, Bernard Barton, who, like himself, was engaged in the drudgery of figures. The pure and gentle tone of the poems of his new acquaintance was welcome to Lamb, who had more sympathy with the truth of nature in modest guise than in the affected fury of Lord Byron, or the dreamy extravagances of Shelley. Lamb had written in "Elia" of the Society of Friends with the freedom of one who, with great respect for the principles of the founders of their faith, had little in common with a sect who shunned the pleasures while they mingled in the business of the world; and a friendly expostulation on the part of Mr. Barton led to such cordial excuses as completely won the heart of the Quaker bard. Some expression which Lamb let fall at their meeting in London, from which Mr. Barton had supposed that Lamb objected to a Quaker's writing poetry as inconsistent with his creed, induced Mr. Barton to write to Lamb on his return to Woodbridge, who replied as follows:—

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"India House, 11th Sept., 1822.

"Dear Sir—You have misapprehended me sadly if you suppose that I meant to impute any inconsistency in your writing poetry with your religious profession. I do not remember what I said, but it was spoken sportively, I am sure—one of my levities, which you are not so used to as my older friends. I probably was thinking of the light in which your so indulging yourself would appear to Quakers, and put their objection into my own mouth. I would eat my words

(provided they should be written on not very coarse paper) rather than I would throw cold water upon your, and my once, harmless occupation.

"I have read Napoleon and the rest with delight. I like them for what they are and for what they are not. I have sickened on the modern rhodomontade and Byronism, and your plain Quakerish beauty has captivated me. It is all wholesome cates, ay, and toothsome too, and withal Quakerish. If I were George Fox, and George Fox licenser of the press, they should have my absolute *imprimatur*. I hope I have removed the impression.

"I am, like you, a prisoner to the desk. I have been chained to that galley thirty years; a long shot. I have almost grown to the wood. If no *imaginative*, I am sure I am a *figurative* writer. Do Friends allow puns? *verbal* equivocations? they are unjustly accused of it, and I did my best in the 'Imperfect Sympathies' to vindicate them. I am very tired of clerking it, but have no remedy. Did you see a sonnet to this purpose in the Examiner?

> 'Who first invented work, and bound the free
> And holyday rejoicing spirit down
> To the ever-haunting importunity
> Of business, in the green fields and the town,
> To plough, loom, anvil, spade; and oh, most sad,
> To that dry drudgery at the desk's dead wood?
> Who but the being unbless'd, alien from good,
> Sabbathless Satan! he who his unglad
> Task ever plies mid rotatory burnings,
> That round and round incalculably reel;
> For wrath Divine hath made him like a wheel
> In that red realm from which are no returnings;
> Where, toiling and turmoiling, ever and aye,
> He and his thoughts keep pensive working-day.'

"I fancy the sentiment expressed above will be nearly your own. The expression of it, probably, would not so well suit with a follower of John Woolman. But I do not know whether diabolism is a part of your creed, or where, indeed, to find an exposition of your creed at all. In feelings and matters not dogmatical, I hope I am half a Quaker. Believe me, with great respect, yours,

"C. LAMB.

"I shall always be happy to see or hear from you."

Encouraged by Lamb's kindness, Mr. Barton continued the correspondence, which became the most frequent in which Lamb had engaged for many years. The following letter is in acknowledgment of a publication of Mr. Barton's, chiefly directed to oppose the theories and tastes of Lord Byron and his friends.

TO BERNRAD BARTON.

East India House, 9th Oct., 1822.

'Dear Sir—I am ashamed not sooner to have acknowledged your letter and poem. I think the latter very temperate, very serious, and very seasonable. I do not think it will convert the club at Pisa, neither do I think it will satisfy the bigots on our side the water. Something like a parody on the song of Ariel would please them better:

'Full fathom five the Atheist lies,
Of his bones are hell-dice made.'

"I want time and fancy to fill up the rest. I sincerely sympathize with you in your confinement. Of time, health, and riches, the first in order is not last in excellence. Riches are chiefly good, because they give us time. What a weight of wearisome prison-hours have I to look back and forward to, as quite cut out of life; and the sting of the thing is, that for six hours every day I have no business which I could not contract into two, if they would let me work task-work.

* * * * * *

"I am returning a poor letter. I was formerly a great scribbler in that way, but my hand is out of order. If I said my head too, I should not be very much out, but I will tell no tales of myself; I will therefore end (after my best thanks, with a hope to see you again some time in London), begging you to accept this letteret for a letter—a leveret makes a better present than a grown hare, and short troubles (as the old excuse goes) are best.

"I remain, dear sir, yours truly,

"C. LAMB."

The next letter will speak for itself.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"23d Dec., 1822.

"Dear Sir—I have been so distracted with business and one thing or other, I have not had a quiet quarter of an hour for epistolary purposes. Christmas, too, is come, which always puts a rattle into my morning scull. It is a visiting, unquiet, unquakerish season. I get more and more in love with solitude, and proportionately hampered with company. I hope you have some holydays at this period. I have one day—Christmas day; alas! too few to commemorate the season. All work and no play dulls me. Company is not play, but many times hard work. To play is for a man to do what he pleases, or to do nothing—to go about soothing his particular

fancies. I have lived to a time of life to have outlived the good hours, the nine o'clock suppers, with a bright hour or two to clear up in afterward. Now you cannot get tea before that hour, and then sit gaping, music-bothered, perhaps, till half past twelve brings up the tray; and what you steal of convivial enjoyment after is heavily paid for in the disquiet of to-morrow's head.

"I am pleased with your liking 'John Woodvil,' and amused with your knowledge of our drama being confined to Shakspeare and Miss Baillie. What a world of fine territory between Land's End and Johnny Groat's have you missed traversing! I could almost envy you to have so much to read. I feel as if I had read all the books I want to read. Oh! to forget Fielding, Steele, &c., &c., and read 'em *new!*

"Can you tell me a likely place where I could pick up, cheap, Fox's Journal? There are no Quaker circulating libraries! Elwood, too, I must have. I rather grudge that S—— has taken up the history of your people; I am afraid he will put in some levity. I am afraid I am not quite exempt from that fault in certain magazine articles, where I have introduced mention of them. Were they to do again, I would reform them. Why should not you write a poetical account of your old worthies, deducing them from Fox to Woolman? but I remember you did talk of something of that kind, as a counterpart to the 'Ecclesiastical Sketches.' But would not a poem be more consecutive than a string of sonnets? You have no martyrs *quite to the fire*, I think, among you; but plenty of heroic confessors, spirit-martyrs, lamb-lions. Think of it; it would be better than a series of sonnets on 'Eminent Bankers.' I like a hit at our way of life, though it does well for me, better than anything short of *all one's time to one's self;* for which alone I rankle with envy at the rich. Books are good, and pictures are good, and money to buy them therefore good, but to buy *time!* in other words, life!

"The 'Compliments of the Time' to you should end my letter; to a Friend, I suppose I must say the 'Sincerity of the Season:' I hope they both mean the same. With excuses for this hastily-penned note, believe me, with great respect,

"C. LAMB."

In this winter Mr. Walter Wilson, one of the friends of Lamb's youth, applied to him for information respecting De Foe, whose life he was about to write. The renewal of the acquaintance was very pleasant to Lamb, who many years before used to take daily walks with Wilson, and to call him "brother." The following is Lamb's reply.

TO MR. WALTER WILSON.

"E. I. H., 16th December, 1822.

"Dear Wilson—*Lightning* I was going to call you. You must have thought me negligent in not answering your letter sooner. But I have a habit of never writing letters but at the office; 'tis so much time cribbed out of the Company; and I am but just got out of the thick of a tea-sale, in which most of the entry of notes, deposites, &c., usually falls to my share.

"I have nothing of De Foe's but two or three novels, and the 'Plague History.' I can give you no information about him. As a slight general character of what I remember of them (for I have not looked into them latterly), I would say that, in the appearance of *truth*, in all the incidents and conversations that occur in them, they exceed any works of fiction I am acquainted with. It is perfect illusion. The *author* never appears in these self-narratives (for so they ought to be called, or rather autobiographies), but the *narrator* chains us down to an implicit belief in everything he says. There is all the minute detail of a logbook in it. Dates are painfully pressed upon the memory. Facts are repeated over and over in varying phrases, till you cannot choose but believe them. It is like reading evidence in a court of justice. So anxious the story-teller seems that the truth should be clearly comprehended, that when he has told us a matter-of-fact or a motive, in a line or two farther down he *repeats* it, with his favourite figure of speech, 'I say,' so and so, though he had made it abundantly plain before. This is in imitation of the common people's way of speaking, or rather of the way in which they are addressed by a master or mistress, who wishes to impress something upon their memories, and has a wonderful effect upon matter-of-fact readers. Indeed, it is to such principally that he writes. His style is everywhere beautiful, but plain and *homely*. Robinson Crusoe is delightful to all ranks and classes, but it is easy to see that it is written in phraseology peculiarly adapted to the lower conditions of readers; hence it is an especial favourite with seafaring men, poor boys, servant-maids, &c. His novels are capital kitchen-reading, while they are worthy, from their deep interest, to find a shelf in the libraries of the wealthiest and the most learned. His passion for *matter-of-fact narrative* sometimes betrayed him into a long relation of common incidents, which might happen to any man, and have no interest but the intense appearance of truth in them to recommend them. The whole latter half or two thirds of 'Colonel Jack' is of this description. The beginning of 'Colonel Jack' is the most affecting natural picture of a young thief that was ever drawn. His

losing the stolen money in the hollow of a tree, and finding it again when he was in despair, and then being in equal distress at not knowing how to dispose of it, and several similar touches in the early history of the colonel, evince a deep knowledge of human nature; and, putting out of question the superior *romantic* interest of the latter, in my mind, very much exceed Crusoe. 'Roxana' (first edition) is the next in interest, though he left out the best part of it in subsequent editions from a foolish hypercriticism of his friend Southerne. But 'Moll Flanders,' the 'Account of the Plague,' &c., are all of one family, and have the same stamp of character. Believe me, with friendly recollections, *Brother* (as I used to call you),

"Yours,
"C. LAMB."

How bitterly Lamb felt his East India bondage has abundantly appeared from his letters during many years. Yet there never was wanting a secret consciousness of the benefits which it ensured for him, the precious independence which he won by his hours of toil, and the freedom of his mind, to work only "at its own sweet will," which his confinement to the desk obtained. This sense of the blessings which a fixed income, derived from ascertained duties, confers, broke out on the wish of his fellow-labourer, Bernard Barton, to cast off the trammels of the banking-house, and rely on literature for subsistence; and in the generous dissuasion of his friend from an act of folly, which he had perhaps been tempted to contemplate by Lamb's own complainings, made a noble amends to his leger for all his unjust reproaches. The references to the booksellers have the colouring of fantastical exaggeration, by which he delighted to give effect to the immediate feeling; but, making allowance for this mere play of fancy, how just is the following advice—how wholesome for every youth who hesitates whether he shall abandon the certain reward of plodding industry for the splendid miseries of authorship![*]

[*] It is singular that, some years before, Mr. Barton had received similar advice from a very different poet—Lord Byron. As the letter has never been published, and it may be interesting to compare the expressions of two men so different on the same subject, I subjoin it here:—

"TO BERNARD BARTON, ESQ.

"St. James's-street, June 1, 1812.

"Sir—The most satisfactory answer to the concluding part of your letter is, that Mr. Murray will republish your volume if you still retain your inclination for the experiment, which, I trust, will be successful. Some weeks ago my friend Mr. Rogers showed me some of the stanzas in MS., and I then expressed my opinion of their merit, which a further perusal of the printed

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"9th January, 1823.

"Throw yourself on the world without any rational plan of support beyond what the chance employ of booksellers would afford you!

"Throw yourself rather, my dear sir, from the steep Tarpeian rock, slap-dash headlong upon iron spikes. If you have but five consolatory minutes between the desk and the bed, make much of them, and live a century in them rather than turn slave to the booksellers. They are Turks and Tartars when they have poor authors at their beck. Hitherto you have been at arm's length from them. Come not within their grasp. I have known many authors want for bread, some repining, others enjoying the blessed security of a spunging-house, all agreeing they had rather have been tailors, weavers—what not? rather than the things they were. I have known some starved, some to go mad, one dear friend literally dying in a workhouse. You know not what a rapacious set these booksellers are. Ask even Southey, who (a single case almost) has made a fortune by book-drudgery, what he has found them. Oh, you know not, may you never know, the miseries of subsisting by authorship! 'Tis a pretty appendage to a

volume has given me no reason to revoke. I mention this, as it may not be disagreeable to you to learn that I entertained a very favourable opinion of your powers before I was aware that such sentiments were reciprocal. Waving your obliging expressions as to my own productions, for which I thank you very sincerely, and assure you that I think not lightly of the praise of one whose approbation is valuable, will you allow me to talk to you candidly, not critically, on the subject of yours? You will not suspect me of a wish to discourage, since I pointed out to the publisher the propriety of complying with your wishes. I think more highly of your poetical talents than it would perhaps gratify you to have expressed; for I believe, from what I observe of your mind, that you are above flattery. To come to the point, you deserve success; but we knew before Addison wrote his Cato that desert does not always command it. But suppose it attained,

> "'You know what ills the author's life assail,
> Toil, envy, want, the patron, and the jail.'

Do not renounce writing, *but never trust entirely to authorship.* If you have a profession, retain it; it will be like Prior's fellowship, a last and sure resource. Compare Mr. Rogers with other authors of the day; assuredly he is among the first of living poets, but is it to that he owes his station in society, and his intimacy in the best circles?—no, it is to his prudence and respectability. The world (a bad one, I own) courts him because he has no occasion to court it. He is a poet, nor is he less so because he is something more. I am not sorry to hear that you were not tempted by the vicinity of Capel Lofft, Esq.—though, if he had done for you what he has for the Bloomfields, I should never have laughed at his rage for patronising. But a truly well constituted mind will ever be independent. That you may be so is my sincere wish; and if others think as well of your poetry as I do, you will have no cause to complain of your readers. Believe me,

"Your obliged and obedient servant.

"BYRON."

situation like yours or mine; but a slavery, worse than all slavery, to be a bookseller's dependant, to drudge your brains for pots of ale and breasts of mutton, *to change your* FREE THOUGHTS *and* VOLUNTARY NUMBERS *for ungracious* TASKWORK. The booksellers hate us. The reason I take to be, that contrary to other trades, in which the master gets all the credit (a jeweller or silversmith, for instance), and the journeyman, who really does the fine work, is in the background: in *our* work the world gives all the credit to us, whom *they* consider as *their* journeymen, and therefore do they hate us, and cheat us, and oppress us, and would wring the blood of us out, to put another sixpence in their mechanic pouches!

* * * * * *

"Keep to your bank, and the bank will keep you. Trust not to the public; you may hang, starve, drown yourself for anything that worthy *personage* cares. I bless every star, that Providence, not seeing good to make me independent, has seen it next good to settle me upon the stable foundation of Leadenhall. Sit down, good B. B., in the banking-office; what! is there not from six to eleven, P.M., six days in the week, and is there not all Sunday? Fy, what a superfluity of man's time, if you could think so! Enough for relaxation, mirth, converse, poetry, good thoughts, quiet thoughts. Oh the corroding, torturing, tormenting thoughts that disturb the brain of the unlucky wight who must draw upon it for daily sustenance! Henceforth I retract all my fond complaints of mercantile employment; look upon them as lover's quarrels. I was but half in earnest. Welcome dead timber of the desk, that gives me life. A little grumbling is a wholesome medicine for the spleen, but in my inner heart do I approve and embrace this our close but unharassing way of life. I am quite serious. If you can send me Fox, I will not keep it *six weeks*, and will return it, with warm thanks to yourself and friend, without blot or dog's-ear. You will much oblige me by this kindness.

"Yours truly,

"C. LAMB."

Lamb thus communicated to Mr. Barton his prosecution of his researches into Primitive Quakerism.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"February, 1823.

"My dear Sir—I have read quite through the ponderous folio of George Fox. Pray how may I return it to Mr. Skewell, at Ipswich? I fear to send such a treasure by a stage-coach; not that I am afraid of the coachman or the guard

reading it, but it might be lost. Can you put me in a way of sending it safely? The kind-hearted owner trusted it to me for six *months*; I think I was about as many *days* in getting through it, and I do not think that I skipped a word of it. I have quoted G. F. in my 'Quaker Meeting,' as having said he was 'lifted up in spirit' (which I felt at the time to be not a Quaker phrase), 'and the judge and the jury were as dead men under his feet.' I find no such words in his journal, and I did not get them from Sewell, and the latter sentence I am sure I did not mean to invent; I must have put some other Quaker's words into his mouth. Is it a fatality in me, that everything I touch turns into a 'a lye?' I once quoted two lines from a translation of Dante, which Hazlitt very greatly admired, and quoted in a book as proof of the stupendous power of that poet, but no such lines are to be found in the translation, which has been searched for the purpose. I must have dreamed them, for I am quite certain I did not forge them knowingly. What a misfortune to have a lying memory! Your description of Mr. M——'s place makes me long for a pippin, and some carraways, and a cup of sack, in his orchard, when the sweets of the night came in. Farewell.

"C. LAMB."

In the beginning of the year 1823, the "Essays of Elia," collected in a volume, were published by Messrs. Taylor and Hessey, who had become the proprietors of the "London Magazine." The book met with a rapid sale, while the magazine in which its contents had appeared declined. The anecdote of the three Quakers gravely walking out of the inn where they had taken tea on the road, on an extortionate demand, one after the other, without paying anything,* had excited some gentle remonstrance on the part of Barton's sister, to which Lamb thus replied.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Dear Sir—The approbation of my little book by your sister is very pleasing to me. The Quaker incident did not happen to me, but to Carlisle the surgeon, from whose mouth I have twice heard it, at an interval of ten or twelve years, with little or no variation, and have given it exactly as I could remember it. The gloss which your sister or you have put upon it does not strike me as correct. Carlisle drew no inference from it against the honesty of the Quakers, but only in favour of their surprising coolness; that they should be capable of committing a good joke, with an ut-

* See Elia's "Imperfect Sympathies," vol. ii., p. 73.

ter insensibility to its being any jest at all. I have reason to believe in the truth of it, because, as I have said, I heard him repeat it without variation at such an interval. The story loses sadly in print, for Carlisle is the best storyteller I ever heard. The idea of the discovery of roasting pigs I also borrowed from my friend Manning, and am willing to confess both my plagiarisms. Should fate so order it that you shall be in town with your sister, mine bids me say that she shall have great pleasure in being introduced to her.

* * * * * *

"They have dragged me again into the magazine, but I feel the spirit of the thing in my own mind quite gone. 'Some brains' (I think Ben Jonson says it) 'will endure but one skinning.' We are about to have an inundation of poetry from the Lakes—Wordsworth and Southey are coming up strong from the north. How did you like Hartley's sonnets? The first, at least, is vastly fine. I am ashamed of the shabby letters I send, but I am by nature anything but neat. Therein my mother bore me no Quaker. I never could seal a letter without dropping the wax on one side, besides scalding my fingers. I never had a seal, too, of my own. Writing to a great man lately, who is moreover very heraldic, I borrowed a seal of a friend who, by the female side, claims the protectoral arms of Cromwell. How they must have puzzled my correspondent! My letters are generally charged as double at the postoffice, from their inveterate clumsiness of foldure; so you must not take it disrespectful to yourself if I send you such ungainly scraps. I think I lose 100*l.* a year at the India House, owing solely to my want of neatness in making up accounts. How I puzzle 'em out at last is the wonder. I have to do with millions!

"It is time to have done my incoherences.

"Believe me yours truly,

"C. LAMB"

Lamb thus records a meeting with the poets.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"April, 1823.

"Dear Sir—I wished for you yesterday. I dined in Parnassus, with Wordsworth, Coleridge, Rogers, and Tom Moore—half the poetry of England constellated and clustered in Gloucester Place! It was a delightful evening! Coleridge was in his finest vein of talk—had all the talk; and let 'em talk as they will of the envy of poets, I am sure not one there but was content to be nothing but a listener. The Muses

were dumb while Apollo lectured on his and their fine art It is a lie that poets are envious; I have known the best of them, and can speak to it, that they give each other their merits, and are the kindest critics as well as the best authors. I am scribbling a muddy epistle with an aching head, for we did not quaff Hippocrene last night; marry, it was hippocrass rather. Pray accept this as a letter in the mean time."

* * * * * *

Here is an apology for a letter, referring to the vignette on the titlepage of one of his friend's books.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"May, 1823.

"Dear Sir—I am vexed to be two letters in your debt, but I have been quite out of the vein lately. A philosophical treatise is wanting of the causes of the backwardness with which persons, after a certain time of life, set about writing a letter. I always feel as if I had nothing to say, and the performance generally justifies the presentiment.

* * * * * *

"I do not exactly see why the goose and little goslings should emblematize *a Quaker poet that has no children* or but one. But, after all, perhaps it is a pelican. The '*Mene, Mene, Tekel Upharsin*' around it I cannot decipher. The songster of the night pouring out her effusions amid an audience of madge owlets would be at least intelligible. A full pause here comes upon me as if I had not a word more left. I will shake my brain. Once! Twice!—nothing comes up. George Fox recommends waiting on these occasions. I wait. Nothing comes. G. Fox—that sets me off again. I have finished the 'Journal,' and 400 more pages of the '*Doctrinals*,' which I picked up for 7*s.* 6*d.* If I get on at this rate, the society will be in danger of having two Quaker poets to patronise."

* * * * * *

The following letter was addressed to Mr. Procter, in acknowledgment of a miniature of Pope which he had presented to Lamb.

TO MR. PROCTER.

"Dear Lad—You must think me a brute beast, a rhinoceros, never to have acknowledged the receipt of your precious present. But, indeed, I am none of those shocking things, but have arrived at that indisposition to letter-writing which would make it a hard exertion to write three lines to a king

to spare a friend's life. Whether it is that the Magazine paying me so much a page, I am loath to throw away composition—how much a sheet do you give your correspondents? I have hung up Pope, and a gem it is, in my town room; I hope for your approval. Though it accompanies the 'Essay on Man,' I think that was not the poem he is here meditating. He would have looked up, somehow affectedly, as if he were just conceiving 'Awake, my St. John.' Neither is he in the 'Rape of the Lock' mood exactly. I think he has just made out the last lines of the 'Epistle to Jervis,' between gay and tender,

'And other beauties envy Wortley's eyes.'

"I'll be hanged if that isn't the line. He is brooding over it with a dreamy phantom of Lady Mary floating before him. He is thinking which is the earliest possible day and hour that she will first see it. What a miniature piece of gentility it is! Why did you give it me? I do not like you enough to give you anything so good.

"I have dined with T. Moore and breakfasted with Rogers since I saw you; have much to say about them when we meet, which, I trust, will be in a week or two. I have been overwatched and overpoeted since Wordsworth has been in town. I was obliged, for health sake, to wish him gone; but, now he is gone, I feel a great loss. I am going to Dalston to recruit, and have serious thoughts of—altering my condition, that is, of taking to sobriety. What do you advise me?

"Rogers spake very kindly of you, as everybody does, and none with so much reason as your

"C. L."

CHAPTER XIII.

[1823.]

Lamb's Controversy with Southey.

In the year 1823 Lamb appeared, for the first and only time of his life, before the public as an assailant; and the object of his attack was one of his oldest and fastest friends, Mr. Southey. It might, indeed, have been predicted of Lamb, that if ever he *did* enter the arena of personal controversy, it would be with one who had obtained a place in his affection;

for no motive less powerful than the resentment of friendship which deemed itself wounded could place him in a situation so abhorrent to his habitual thoughts. Lamb had, up to this time, little reason to love reviews or reviewers; and the connexion of Southey with "The Quarterly Review," while he felt that it raised, and softened, and refined the tone of that powerful organ of a great party, sometimes vexed him for his friend. His indignation also had been enlisted on behalf of Hazlitt and Hunt, who had been attacked in this work in a manner which he regarded as unfair; for the critics had not been content with descanting on the peculiarities in the style and taste of the one, or reprobating the political or personal vehemence of the other—which were fair subjects of controversy—but spoke of them with a contempt which every man of letters had a right to resent as unjust. He had been much annoyed by an allusion to himself in an article on "Hazlitt's Political Essays," which appeared in the Review for November, 1819, as "one whom we should wish to see in more respectable company;" for he felt a compliment paid him at the expense of a friend as a grievance far beyond any direct attack on himself. He was also exceedingly hurt by a reference made in an article on Dr. Reid's work "On Nervous Affections," which appeared in July, 1822, to an essay which he had contributed some years before to a collection of tracts published by his friend, Mr. Bazil Montague, on the effect of spirituous liquors, entitled "The Confessions of a Drunkard." The contribution of this paper is a striking proof of the prevalence of Lamb's personal regards over all selfish feelings and tastes; for no one was less disposed than he to Montague's theory or practice of abstinence; yet he was willing to gratify his friend by this terrible picture of the extreme effects of intemperance, of which his own occasional deviations from the right line of sobriety had given him hints and glimpses. The reviewer of Dr. Reid, adverting to this essay, speaks of it as "a fearful picture of the consequences of intemperance, which WE happen to know is a true tale." How far it was from actual truth, the "Essays of Elia," the production of a later day, in which the maturity of his feeling, humour, and reason is exhibited, may sufficiently show. These articles were not written by Mr. Southey, but they prepared Lamb to feel acutely any attack from the Review; and a paragraph in an article in the number for July, 1823, entitled "Progress of Infidelity," in which he recognised the hand of his old friend, gave poignancy to all the painful associations which had arisen from the same work, and concentrated them in one bitter feeling. After recording some of the confessions

of unbelievers of the wretchedness which their infidelity brought on them, Mr. Southey thus proceeded:—

"Unbelievers have not always been honest enough thus to express their real feelings; but this we know concerning them, that when they have renounced their birthright of hope, they have not been able to divest themselves of fear. From the nature of the human mind, this might be presumed, and, in fact, it is so. They may deaden the heart and stupify the conscience, but they cannot destroy the imaginative faculty. There is a remarkable proof of this in 'Elia's Essays,' a book which wants only a sounder religious feeling to be as delightful as it is original. In that upon 'Witches and the other Night Fears,' he says, 'It is not book, or picture, or the stories of foolish servants which create these terrors in children; they can, at most, but give them a direction. Dear little T. H., who, of all children, has been brought up with the most scrupulous exclusion of every taint of superstition, who was never allowed to hear of goblin or apparition, or scarcely to be told of bad men, or to hear or read of any distressing story, finds all this world of fear from which he has been so rigidly excluded *ab extra*, in his own "thick-coming fancies," and from his little midnight pillow this nursechild of optimism will start at shapes, unborrowed of tradition, in sweats to which the reveries of the well-damned murderer are tranquillity.' This poor child, instead of being trained up in the way he should go, had been bred in the ways of modern philosophy; he had systematically been prevented from knowing anything of that Saviour who said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven;' care had been taken that he should not pray to God, nor lie down at night in reliance upon his good providence! Nor let it be supposed that terrors of imagination belong to childhood alone. The reprobate heart, which has discarded all love of God, cannot so easily rid itself of the fear of the devil; and even when it succeeds in that also, it will then create a hell for itself. We have heard of unbelievers who thought it probable that they should be awake in their graves! and this was the opinion for which they had exchanged a Christian's hope of immortality!"

The allusion in this paragraph was really, as Lamb was afterward convinced, intended by Mr. Southey to assist the sale of the book. In haste, having expunged a word which he thought improper, he wrote "*sounder* religious feeling," not satisfied with the epithet, but meaning to correct it in the proof, which, unfortunately, was never sent him. Lamb saw it

on his return from a month's pleasant holydays at Hastings, and expressed his first impression respecting it in a letter

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Dear Sir—I have just returned from Hastings, where are exquisite views and walks, and where I have given up my soul to walking, and I am now suffering sedentary contrasts. I am a long time reconciling to town after one of these excursions. Home is become strange, and will remain so yet a while; *home is the most unforgiving of friends, and always resents absence;* I know its old cordial looks will return, but they are slow in clearing up. That is one of the features of this our galley-slavery, that peregrination ended makes things worse. I felt out of water (with all the sea about me) at Hastings; and, just as I had learned to domicilitate there, I must come back to find a home which is no home. I abused Hastings, but learned its value. There are spots, inland bays, &c., which realize the notions of Juan Fernandez. The best thing I lit upon by accident was a small country church (by whom or when built unknown), standing bare and single in the midst of a grove, with no house or appearance of habitation within a quarter of a mile, only passages diverging from it through beautiful woods to so many farmhouses. There it stands, like the first idea of a church, before parishioners were thought of, nothing but birds for its congregation; or like a hermit's oratory (the hermit dead), or a mausoleum; its effects singularly impressive, like a church found in a desert isle to startle Crusoe with a home image: you must make out a vicar and a congregation from fancy, for surely none come there; yet it wants not its pulpit, and its font, and all the seemly additaments of *our* worship.

"Southey has attacked 'Elia' on the score of infidelity, in the Quarterly article, 'Progress of Infidelity.' He might have spared an old friend such a construction of a few careless flights, that meant no harm to religion; but I love and respect Southey, and will not retort. I hate his review, and his being a reviewer. The hint he has droppod will knock the sale of the book on the head, which was almost at a stop before. Let it stop—there is corn in Egypt while there is cash at Leadenhall! You and I are something besides being writers, thank God!

"Yours truly,
"C. L."

This feeling was a little diverted by the execution of a scheme, rather suddenly adopted, of removing to a neat cot-

tage at Islington, where Lamb first found himself installed in the dignity of a householder. He thus describes his residence

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"2d September, 1823.

"Dear B. B.—What will you say to my not writing? You cannot say I do not write now. When you come Londonward, you will find me no longer in Covent Garden; I have a cottage in Colebrook Row, Islington; a cottage, for it is detached; a white house, with six good rooms in it; the New River (rather elderly by this time) runs (if a moderate walking pace can be so termed) close to the foot of the house; and behind is a spacious garden, with vines (I assure you), pears, strawberries, parsnips, leeks, carrots, cabbages, to delight the heart of old Alcinous. You enter without passage into a cheerful dining-room, all studded over and rough with old books; and above is a lightsome drawing-room, three windows, full of choice prints. I feel like a great lord, never having had a house before.

"The 'London,' I fear, falls off. I linger among its creaking rafters like the last rat; it will topple down if they don't get some buttresses. They have pulled down three; Hazlitt, Procter, and their best stay, kind, light-hearted W——, their Janus. The best is, neither of our fortunes is concerned in it.

"I heard of you from Mr. P—— this morning, and that gave a fillip to my laziness, which has been intolerable; but I am so taken up with pruning and gardening, quite a new sort of occupation to me. I have gathered my jargonels, but my Windsor pears are backward. The former were of exquisite raciness. I do now sit under my own vine, and contemplate the growth of vegetable nature. I can now understand in what sense they speak of *father Adam*. I recognise the paternity while I watch my tulips. I almost feel with him too; for the first day I turned a drunken gardener (as he let in the serpent) into my Eden, and he laid about him, lopping off some choice boughs, &c., which hung over from a neighbour's garden, and, in his blind zeal, laid waste a shade which had sheltered their window from the gaze of passers by. The old gentlewoman (fury made her not handsome) could scarcely be reconciled by all my fine words. There was no buttering her parsnips. She talked of the law. What a lapse to commit on the first day of my happy 'garden state!'

"I hope you transmitted the Fox Journal to its owner, with suitable thanks. Pray accept this for a letter, and believe me with sincere regards,

"Yours,

"C. L."

In the next letter to Barton Lamb referred to an intended letter to Southey in the Magazine.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"September, 1823.

"Dear Sir—I have again been reading your 'Stanzas on Bloomfield,' which are the most appropriate that can be imagined—sweet with Doric delicacy. I like that—

'Our own more chaste Theocritus'—

just hinting at the fault of the Grecian. I love that stanza ending with,

'Words, phrases, fashions pass away;
But truth and nature live through all.'

But I shall omit in my own copy the one stanza which alludes to Lord B., I suppose. It spoils the sweetness and continuity of the feeling. Cannot we think of Burns, or Thomson, without sullying the thought with a reflection out of place upon Lord Rochester? These verses might have been inscribed upon a tomb; are, in fact, an epitaph; satire does not look pretty upon a tombstone. Besides, there is a quotation in it, always bad in verse, seldom advisable in prose. I doubt if their having been in a paper will not prevent T. and H. from insertion; but I shall have a thing to send in a day or two, and shall try them. Omitting that stanza, a very little alteration is wanting in the beginning of the next. You see I use freedom. How happily (I flatter not) you have brought in his subjects; and (I suppose) his favourite measure, though I am not acquainted with any of his writings but the 'Farmer's Boy.' He dined with me once, and his manners took me exceedingly.

"I rejoice that you forgive my long silence. I continue to estimate my own roof comforts highly. How could I remain all my life a lodger? My garden thrives (I am told), though I have yet reaped nothing but some tiny salads and withered carrots. But a garden's a garden anywhere, and twice a garden in London.

* * * * * *

"Do you go on with your 'Quaker Sonnets?' have 'em ready with 'Southey's Book of the Church.' I meditate a letter to S. in the 'London,' which, perhaps, will meet the fate of the sonnet.

"Excuse my brevity, for I write painfully at office, liable to a hundred callings off; and I can never sit down to an epistle elsewhere. I read or walk. If you return this letter

to the postoffice, I think they will return fourpence, seeing it is but half a one. Believe me, though,

"Entirely yours,

"C. L."

The contemplated expostulation with Southey was written, and appeared in the "London Magazine for October, 1823." Lamb did not print it in any subsequent collection of his essays; but I give it now, as I have reason to know that its publication will cause no painful feelings in the mind of Mr. Southey, and as it forms the only ripple on the kindliness of Lamb's personal and literary life.

LETTER OF ELIA TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

"Sir—You have done me an unfriendly office, without, perhaps, much considering what you were doing. You have given an ill name to my poor lucubrations. In a recent paper on Infidelity, you usher in a conditional commendation of them with an exception; which, preceding the encomium, and taking up nearly the same space with it, must impress your readers with the notion that the objectionable parts in them are at least equal in quantity to the pardonable. The censure is, in fact, the criticism; the praise—a concession merely. Exceptions usually follow, to qualify praise or blame. But there stands your reproof, in the very front of your notice, in ugly characters, like some bugbear, to frighten all good Christians from purchasing. Through you I am become an object of suspicion to preceptors of youth and fathers of families '*A book which wants only a sounder religious feeling to be as delightful as it is original.*' With no further explanation, what must your readers conjecture, but that my little volume is some vehicle for heresy or infidelity? The quotation, which you honour me by subjoining, oddly enough, is of a character which bespeaks a temperament in the writer the very reverse of *that* your reproof goes to insinuate. Had you been taxing me with superstition, the passage would have been pertinent to the censure. Was it worth your while to go so far out of your way to affront the feelings of an old friend, and commit yourself by an irrelevant quotation, for the pleasure of reflecting upon a poor child, an exile at Genoa?

"I am at a loss what particular essay you had in view (if my poor ramblings amount to that appellation) when you were in such a hurry to thrust in your objection, like bad news, foremost. Perhaps the paper on 'Saying Graces' was the obnoxious feature. I have endeavoured there to rescue a voluntary duty—good in place, but never, as I remember, lit-

erally commanded—from the charge of an undecent formality. Rightly taken, sir, that paper was not against graces, but want of grace; not against the ceremony, but the carelessness and slovenliness so often observed in the performance of it.

"Or was it *that* on the 'New Year'—in which I have described the feelings of the merely natural man on a consideration of the amazing change which is supposable to take place on our removal from this fleshly scene? If men would honestly confess their misgivings (which few men will), there are times when the strongest Christian of us, I believe, has reeled under questionings of such staggering obscurity. I do not accuse you of this weakness. There are some who tremblingly reach out shaking hands to the guidance of Faith—others who stoutly venture into the dark (their Human Confidence their leader, whom they mistake for Faith); and, investing themselves beforehand with cherubic wings, as they fancy, find their new robes as familiar, and fitting to their supposed growth and stature in godliness, as the coat they left off yesterday—some whose hope totters upon crutches—others who stalk into futurity upon stilts.

"The contemplation of a Spiritual World—which, without the addition of a misgiving conscience, is enough to shake some natures to their foundation—is smoothly got over by others, who shall float over the black billows, in their little boat of No-distrust, as unconcernedly as over a summer sea. The difference is chiefly constitutional.

"One man shall love his friends and his friends' faces; and, under the uncertainty of conversing with them again, in the same manner and familiar circumstances of sight, speech, &c., as upon earth—in a moment of no irreverent weakness—for a dream-while—no more—would be almost content, for a reward of a life of virtue (if he could ascribe such acceptance to his lame performances), to take up his portion with those he loved, and was made to love, in this good world, which he knows—which was created so lovely, beyond his deservings. Another, embracing a more exalted vision—so that he might receive indefinite additaments of power, knowledge, beauty, glory, &c.—is ready to forego the recognition of humbler individualities of earth, and the old familiar faces. The shapings of our heavens are the modifications of our constitution; and Mr. Feeble Mind or Mr. Great Heart is born in every one of us.

"Some (and such have been accounted the safest divines) have shrunk from pronouncing upon the final state of any man; nor dare they pronounce the case of Judas to be des-

perate. Others (with stronger optics), as plainly as with the eye of flesh, shall behold a *given king* in bliss, and a *given chamberlain* in torment; even to the eternizing of a cast of the eye in the latter, his own self-mocked and good-humouredly-borne deformity on earth, but supposed to aggravate the uncouth and hideous expression of his pangs in the other place. That one man can presume so far, and that another would, with shuddering, disclaim such confidences, is, I believe, an effect of the nerves purely.

"If in either of these papers or elsewhere I have been betrayed into some levities—not affronting the sanctuary, but glancing, perhaps, at some of the outskirts and extreme edges, the debateable land between the holy and the profane regions —(for the admixture of man's inventions, twisting themselves with the name of the religion itself, has artfully made it difficult to touch even the alloy without, in some men's estimation, soiling the fine gold)—if I have sported with the purlieus of serious matter—it was, I dare say, a humour—be not startled, sir—which I have unwittingly derived from yourself You have all your life been making a jest of the devil. Not of the scriptural meaning of that dark essence—personal or allegorical; for the nature is nowhere plainly delivered. I acquit you of intentional irreverence. But, indeed, you have made wonderfully free with, and been mighty pleasant upon, the popular idea and attributes of him. A noble lord, your brother visionary, has scarcely taken greater liberties with the material keys, and merely Catholic notion of St. Peter. You have flattered him in prose; you have chanted him in goodly odes. You have been his jester; volunteer laureate, and self-elected court poet to Beelzebub.

"You have never ridiculed, I believe, what you thought to be religion, but you are always girding at what some pious, but perhaps mistaken, folks think to be so. For this reason I am sorry to hear that you are engaged upon a life of George Fox. I know you will fall into the error of intermixing some comic stuff with your seriousness. The Quakers tremble at the subject in your hands. The Methodists are shy of you upon account of *their* founder. But, above all, our popish brethren are most in your debt. The errors of that church have proved a fruitful source to your scoffing vein. Their legend has been a golden one to you. And here your friends, sir, have noticed a notable inconsistency. To the imposing rites, the solemn penances, devout austerities of that communion; the affecting though erring piety of their hermits; the silence and solitude of the Chartreux—their crossings, their holy waters—their Virgin, and their saints—to these, they

say, you have been indebted for the best feelings and the richest imagery of your Epic poetry. You have drawn copious draughts upon Loretto. We thought at one time you were going post to Rome; but that, in the facetious commentaries which it is your custom to append so plentifully, and (some say) injudiciously, to your loftiest performances in this kind, you spurn the uplifted toe, which you but just now seemed to court; leave his holiness in the lurch; and show him a fair pair of Protestant heels under your Romish vestment. When we think you already at the wicket, suddenly a violent cross wind blows you transverse—

> 'Ten thousand leagues awry. * *
> * * * * Then might we see
> Cowls, hoods, and habits, with their wearers, toss'
> And flutter'd into rags; then relics, beads,
> Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls,
> The sport of winds.'

You pick up pence by showing the hallowed bones, shrine, and crucifix; and you take money a second time by exposing the trick of them afterward. You carry your verse to Castle Angelo for sale in a morning; and, swifter than a pedlar can transmute his pack, you are at Canterbury with your prose ware before night.

"Sir, is it that I dislike you in this merry vein? The re verse. No countenance becomes an intelligent jest better than your own. It is your grave aspect, when you look awful upon your poor friends, which I would deprecate.

"In more than one place, if I mistake not, you have been pleased to compliment me at the expense of my companions. I cannot accept your compliment at such a price. The upbraiding a man's poverty naturally makes him look about him. to see whether he be so poor indeed as he is presumed to be. You have put me upon counting my riches. Really, sir, I did not know I was so wealthy in the article of friendships. There is ——, and ——, whom you never heard of, but exemplary characters both, and excellent churchgoers; and N., mine and my father's friend for nearly half a century; and the enthusiast for Wordsworth's poetry, ——, a little tainted with Socinianism, it is to be feared, but constant in his attachments, and a capital critic; and ——, a sturdy old Athanasian, so that sets all to rights again; and W., the light, and warm-as-light hearted, Janus of the London; and the translator of Dante, still a curate, modest and amiable C.; and Allan C., the large-headed Scot; and P—r, candid and affectionate as his own poetry; and A—p, Coleridge's friend; and G—n, his more than friend; and Coleridge himself, the same to me still as in those old evenings

when we used to sit and speculate (do you remember them, sir?) at our old Salutation tavern, upon Pantisocracy and golden days to come on earth; and W——th (why, sir, I might drop my rent-roll here; such goodly farms and manors have I reckoned up already. In what possessions has not this last name alone estated me!—but I will go on)—and M., the noble-minded kinsman, by wedlock, of W——th; and H. C. R., unwearied in the offices of a friend; and Clarkson, almost above the narrowness of that relation, yet condescending not seldom heretofore from the labour of his world-embracing charity to bless my humble roof; and the galless and single-minded Dyer; and the high-minded associate of Cook, the veteran colonel, with his lusty heart still sending cartels of defiance to old Time; and, not least, W. A., the last and steadiest left to me of that little knot of whist-players that used to assemble weekly, for so many years, at the Queen's Gate (you remember them, sir?), and called Admiral Burney friend.

"I will come to the point at once. I believe you will not make many exceptions to my associates so far. But I have purposely omitted some intimacies, which I do not yet repent of having contracted, with two gentlemen, diametrically opposed to you in principles. You will understand me to allude to the authors of 'Rimini' and of the 'Table Talk.' And first, of the former.

"It is an error more particularly incident to persons of the correctest principles and habits, to seclude themselves from the rest of mankind as from another species, and form into knots and clubs. The best people, herding thus exclusively, are in danger of contracting a narrowness. Heat and cold, dryness and moisture, in the natural world, do not fly asunder, to split the globe into sectarian parts and separations; but mingling, as they best may, correct the malignity of any single predominance. The analogy holds, I suppose, in the moral world. If all the good people were to ship themselves off to Terra Incognita, what, in humanity's name, is to become of the refuse? If the persons whom I have chiefly in view have not pushed matters to this extremity yet, they carry them as far as they can go. Instead of mixing with the infidel and the freethinker—in the room of opening a negotiation, to try at least to find out at which gate the error entered—they huddle close together, in a weak fear of infection, like that pusillanimous underling in Spenser—

> 'This is the wandering wood, this Error's den;
> A monster vile, whom God and man does hate:
> Therefore, I reed, beware. Fly, fly, quoth then
> The fearful Dwarf.'

And, if they be writers in orthodox journals—addressing themselves only to the irritable passions of the unbeliever—they proceed in a safe system of strengthening the strong hands and confirming the valiant knees; of converting the already converted, and proselyting their own party. I am the more convinced of this from a passage in the very treatise which occasioned this letter. It is where, having recommended to the doubter the writings of Michaelis and Lardner, you ride triumphant over the necks of all infidels, skeptics, and dissenters, from this time to the world's end, upon the wheels of two unanswerable deductions. I do not hold it meet to set down, in a miscellaneous compilation like this, such religious words as you have thought fit to introduce into the pages of a petulant literary journal. I therefore beg leave to substitute *numerals*, and refer to the 'Quarterly Review' (for July) for filling of them up. 'Here,' say you, 'as in the history of 7, if these books are authentic, the events which they relate must be true; if they were written by 8, 9 is 10 and 11.' Your first deduction, if it means honestly, rests upon two identical propositions; though I suspect an unfairness in one of the terms, which this would not be quite the proper place for explicating. At all events, *you* have no cause to triumph; you have not been proving the premises, but refer for satisfaction therein to very long and laborious works, which may well employ the skeptic a twelvemonth or two to digest before he can possibly be ripe for your conclusion. When he has satisfied himself about the premises, he will concede to you the inference, I dare say, most readily. But your latter deduction, *viz.*, that because 8 has written a book concerning 9, therefore 10 and 11 was certainly his meaning, is one of the most extraordinary conclusions *per saltum* that I have had the good fortune to meet with. As far as 10 is verbally asserted in the writings, all sects must agree with you; but you cannot be ignorant of the many various ways in which the doctrine of the ******* has been understood, from a low figurative expression (with the Unitarians) up to the most mysterious actuality; in which highest sense alone you and your church take it. And for 11, and that there is *no other possible conclusion*—to hazard this in the face of so many thousands of Arians and Socinians, &c., who have drawn so opposite a one, is such a piece of theological hardihood as, I think, warrants me in concluding that, when you sit down to pen theology, you do not at all consider your opponents; but have in your eye, merely and exclusively, readers of the same way of thinking with yourself, and therefore have no occasion to trouble yourself with the quality of the logic to which you treat them.

"Neither can I think, if you had had the welfare of the poor child—over whose hopeless condition you whine so lamentably and (I must think) unseasonably—seriously at heart, that you could have taken the step of sticking him up *by name* —T. H. is as good as *naming* him—to perpetuate an outrage upon the parental feelings, as long as the 'Quarterly Review' shall last. Was it necessary to specify an individual case, and give to Christian compassion the appearance of personal attack? Is this the way to conciliate unbelievers, or not, rather, to widen the breach irreparably?

"I own I could never think so considerably of myself as to decline the society of an agreeble or worthy man upon difference of opinion only. The impediments and the facilitations to a sound belief are various and inscrutable as the heart of man. Some believe upon weak principles. Others cannot feel the efficacy of the strongest. One of the most candid, most upright, and single-meaning men I ever knew, was the late Thomas Holcroft. I believe he never said one thing and meant another in his life; and, as near as I can guess, he never acted otherwise than with the most scrupulous attention to conscience. Ought we to wish the character false for the sake of a hollow compliment to Christianity?

"Accident introduced me to the acquaintance of Mr. L. H., and the experience of his many friendly qualities confirmed a friendship between us. You, who have been misrepresented yourself, I should hope have not lent an idle ear to the calumnies which have been spread abroad respecting this gentleman. I was admitted to his household for some years, and do most solemnly aver that I believe him to be in his domestic relations as correct as any man. He chose an ill-judged subject for a poem; the peccant humours of which have been visited on him tenfold by the artful use which his adversaries have made of an *equivocal term.* The subject itself was started by Dante, but better because brieflier treated of. But the crime of the lovers, in the Italian and the English poet, with its aggravated enormity of circumstance, is not of a kind (as the critics of the latter well knew) with those conjunctions, for which Nature herself has provided no excuse, because no temptation. It has nothing in common with the black horrors sung by Ford and Massinger. The familiarizing of it in tale or fable may be for that reason incidentally more contagious. In spite of Rimini, I must look upon its author as a man of taste and a poet. He is better than so; he is one of the most cordial-minded men I ever knew, and matchless as a fireside companion. I mean not to affront or wound your feelings when I say that, in his more genial

moods, he has often reminded me of you. There is the same air of mild dogmatism—the same condescending to a boyish sportiveness—in both your conversations. His handwriting is so much the same with your own, that I have opened more than one letter of his, hoping, nay, not doubting, but it was from you, and have been disappointed (he will bear with my saying so) at the discovery of my error. L. H. is unfortunate in holding some loose and not very definite speculations (for, at times, I think he hardly knows whither his premises would carry him) on marriage—the tenets, I conceive, of the 'Political Justice' carried a little further. For anything I could discover in his practice, they have reference, like those, to some future possible condition of society, and not to the present times. But neither for these obliquities of thinking (upon which my own conclusions are as distant as the poles asunder), nor for his political asperities and petulances, which are wearing out with the heats and vanities of youth—did I select him for a friend; but for qualities which fitted him for that relation. I do not know whether I flatter myself with being the occasion, but certain it is, that, touched with some misgivings for sundry harsh things which he had written aforetime against our friend C., before he left this country he sought a reconciliation with that gentleman (himself being his own introducer), and found it.

"L. H. is now in Italy; on his departure to which land with much regret I took my leave of him and of his little family—seven of them, sir, with their mother—and as kind a set of little people (T. H. and all), as affectionate children as ever blessed a parent. Had you seen them, sir, I think you could not have looked upon them as so many little Jonases—but rather as pledges of the vessel's safety, that was to bear such a freight of love.

"I wish you would read Mr. H.'s lines to that same T. H. 'six years old, during a sickness:'—

> 'Sleep breaks at last from out thee,
> My little patient boy'—

(they are to be found in the 47th page of 'Foliage')—and ask yourself how far they are out of the spirit of Christianity. I have a letter from Italy, received but the other day, into which L. H. has put as much as heart, and as many friendly yearnings after old associates and native country as, I think, paper can well hold. It would do you no hurt to give that the perusal also.

"From the *other gentleman* I neither expect nor desire (as he is well assured) any such concessions as L. H. made to C

What hath soured him, and made him to suspect his friends of infidelity towards him, when there was no such matter, I know not. I stood well with him for fifteen years (the proudest of my life), and have ever spoken my full mind of him to some, to whom his panegyric must naturally be least tasteful. I never in thought swerved from him, I never betrayed him, I never slackened in my admiration of him; I was the same to him (neither better nor worse), though he could not see it, as in the days when he thought fit to trust me. At this instant he may be preparing for me some compliment above my deserts, as he sprinkled many such among his admirable books, for which I rest his debtor; or, for anything I know or can guess to the contrary, he may be about to read a lecture on my weaknesses. He is welcome to them (as he was to my humble hearth), if they can divert a spleen or ventilate a fit of sullenness. I wish he would not quarrel with the world at the rate he does; but the reconciliation must be effected by himself, and I despair of living to see that day. But, protesting against much that he has written, and some things which he chooses to do; judging him by his conversation which I enjoyed so long and relished so deeply; or by his books, in those places where no clouding passion intervenes —I should belie my own conscience if I said less than that I think W. H. to be, in his natural and healthy state, one of the wisest and finest spirits breathing. So far from being ashamed of that intimacy which was betwixt us, it is my boast that I was able for so many years to have preserved it entire; and I think I shall go to my grave without finding, or expecting to find, such another companion. But I forget my manners— you will pardon me, sir—I return to the correspondence.

"Sir, you were pleased (you know where) to invite me to a compliance with the wholesome forms and doctrines of the Church of England. I take your advice with as much kindness as it was meant. But I must think the invitation rather more kind than seasonable. I am a Dissenter. The last sect with which you can remember me to have made common profession were the Unitarians. You would not think it very pertinent if (fearing that was not all well with you) I were gravely to invite you (for a remedy) to attend with me a course of Mr Belsham's Lectures at Hackney. Perhaps I have scruples to some of your forms and doctrines. But, if I come, am I secure of civil treatment? The last time I was in any of your places of worship was on Easter Sunday last. I had the satisfaction of listening to a very sensible sermon of an argumentative turn, delivered with great propriety by one of your bishops. The place was Westminster Abbey. As such religion

as I have has always acted on me more by way of sentiment than argumentative process, I was not unwilling, after sermon ended, by no unbecoming transition, to pass over to some serious feelings, impossible to be disconnected from the sight of those old tombs, &c. But, by whose order I know not, I was debarred that privilege even for so short a space as a few minutes; and turned, like a dog or some profane person, out into the common street; with feelings which I could not help, but not very congenial to the day or the discourse. I do not know that I shall ever venture myself again into one of your churches.

"You had your education at Westminster; and, doubtless, among those dim aisles and cloisters you must have gathered much of that devotional feeling in those young years on which your purest mind feeds still—and may it feed! The antiquarian spirit, strong in you, and gracefully blending ever with the religious, may have been sown in you among those wrecks of splendid mortality. You owe it to the place of your education; you owe it to your learned fondness for the architecture of your ancestors; you owe it to the venerableness of your ecclesiastical establishment, which is daily lessened and called in question through these practices, to speak aloud your sense of them; never to desist raising your voice against them till they be totally done away with and abolished; till the doors of Westminster Abbey be no longer against the decent, though low-in-purse enthusiast or blameless devotee, who must commit an injury against his family economy, if he would be indulged with a bare admission within its walls. You owe it to the decencies which you wish to see maintained in its impressive services, that our cathedral be no longer an object of inspection to the poor at those times only, in which they must rob from their attendance on the worship every minute which they can bestow upon the fabric. In vain the public prints have taken up this subject, in vain such poor nameless writers as myself express their indignation. A word from you, sir—a hint in your journal—would be sufficient to fling open the doors of the beautiful temple again, as we can remember them when we were boys. At that time of life, what would the imaginative faculty (such as it is) in both of us have suffered if the entrance to so much reflection had been obstructed by the demand of so much silver! If we had scraped it up to gain an occasional admission (as we certainly should have done), would the sight of those old tombs have been as impressive to us (while we had been weighing anxiously prudence against sentiment) as when the gates stood open, as those of the adjacent park; when we could walk in

at any time, as the mood brought us, for a shorter or longer time, as *that* lasted? Is the being shown over a place the same as silently for ourselves detecting the genius of it? In no part of our beloved Abbey now can a person find entrance (out of service time) under the sum of *two shillings*. The rich and the great will smile at the anti-climax presumed to lie in these two short words. But you can tell them, sir, how much quiet worth, how much capacity for enlarged feeling, how much taste and genius, may coexist, especially in youth, with a purse incompetent to this demand. A respected friend of ours, during his late visit to the metropolis, presented himself for admission to Saint Paul's. At the same time a decently-clothed man, with as decent a wife and child, were bargaining for the same indulgence. The price was only twopence each person. The poor but decent man hesitated, desirous to go in: but there were three of them, and he turned away reluctantly. Perhaps he wished to have seen the tomb of Nelson. Perhaps the interior of the cathedral was his object. But in the state of his finances, even sixpence might reasonably seem too much. Tell the aristocracy of the country (no man can do it more impressively); instruct them of what value these insignificant pieces of money, these minims to their sight, may be to their humbler brethren. Shame these sellers out of the Temple! Show the poor that you can sometimes think of them in some other light than as mutineers and malecontents. Conciliate them by such kind methods to their superiors, civil and ecclesiastical. Stop the mouths of the railers; and suffer your old friends, upon the old terms, again to honour and admire you. Stifle not the suggestions of your better nature with the stale evasion that an indiscriminate admission would expose the tombs to violation. Remember your boy-days. Did you ever see or hear of a mob in the Abbey while it was free to all? Do the rabble come there, or trouble their heads about such speculations? It is all that you can do to drive them into your churches; they do not voluntarily offer themselves. They have, alas! no passion for antiquities; for tomb of king or prelate, sage or poet. If they had, they would no longer be the rabble.

"For forty years that I have known the fabric, the only well-attested charge of violation adduced has been—a ridiculous dismemberment committed upon the effigy of that amiable spy, Major André. And is it for this—the wanton mischief of some schoolboy, fired, perhaps, with raw notions of transatlantic freedom—or the remote possibility of such a mischief occurring again, so easily to be prevented by stationing a constable within the walls, if the vergers are incompetent to

the duty—is it upon such wretched pretences that the people of England are made to pay a new Peter's pence, so long abrogated; or must content themselves with contemplating the ragged exterior of their cathedral? The mischief was done about the time that you were a scholar there. Do you know anything about the unfortunate relic? can you help us in this emergency to find the nose? or can you give Chantrey a notion (from memory) of its pristine life and vigour? I am willing, for peace' sake, to subscribe a guinea towards a restoration of the lamented feature.

"I am, sir,

"Your humble servant,

"ELIA."

The feeling with which this letter was received by Southey may be best described in his own words in a letter to the publisher. "On my part there was not even a momentary feeling of anger; I was very much surprised and grieved, because I knew how much he would condemn himself. And yet no resentful letter was ever written less offensively: his gentle nature may be seen in it throughout." Southey was right in his belief in the revulsion Lamb's feelings would undergo when the excitement under which he had written subsided; for, although he would retract nothing he had ever said or written in defence of his friends, he was ready at once to surrender every resentment of his own. Southey came to London in the following month, and wrote proposing to call at Islington; and 21st November Lamb thus replied:—

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"E. I. H., 21st November, 1823.

"Dear Southey—The kindness of your note has melted away the mist which was upon me. I have been fighting against a shadow. That accursed Q. R. had vexed me by a gratuitous speaking, of its own knowledge, that the 'Confessions of a D——d' was a genuine description of the state of the writer. Little things, that are not ill meant, may produce much ill. *That* might have injured me alive and dead. I am in a public office, and my life is ensured. I was prepared for anger, and I thought I saw, in a few obnoxious words, a hard case of repetition directed against me. I wish both magazine and review at the bottom of the sea. I shall be ashamed to see you, and my sister (though innocent) will be still more so; for the folly was done without her knowledge, and has made her uneasy ever since. My guardian angel was absent at that time.

"I will muster up courage to see you, however, any day next week (Wednesday excepted). We shall hope that you will bring Edith with you. That will be a second mortification. She will hate to see us, but come and heap embers. We deserve it, I for what I've done, and she for being my sister.

"Do come early in the day, by sunlight, that you may see my *Milton*.

"I am at Colebrook cottage, Colebrook Row, Islington. A detached whitish house, close to the New River, end of Colebrook Terrace, left hand coming from Sadler's Wells.

"Will you let me know the day before?

"Your penitent,

"C. LAMB.

"P.S. I do not think your handwriting at all like ****'s. I do not think many things I did think."

In the following letter of the same date Lamb anticipates the meeting.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Dear B. B.—I am ashamed at not acknowledging your kind little poem, which I must needs like much; but I protest I thought I had done it at the moment. Is it possible a letter has miscarried? Did you get one in which I sent you an extract from the poems of Lord Sterling? I should wonder if you did, for I sent you none such. There was an incipient lie strangled in the birth. Some people's conscience is so tender! But, in plain truth, I thank you very much for the verses. I have a very kind letter from the laureate, with a self-invitation to come and shake hands with me. This is truly handsome and noble. 'Tis worthy of my old ideas of Southey. Shall not I, think you, be covered with a red suffusion?

"You are too much apprehensive of your complaint: I know many that are always ailing of it, and live on to a good old age. I know a merry fellow (you partly know him) who, when his medical adviser told him he had drunk away all *that part*, congratulated himself (now his liver was gone) that he should be the longest liver of the two.

"The best way in these cases is to keep yourself as ignorant as you can, as ignorant as the world was before Galen, of the entire inner constructions of the animal man; not to be conscious of a midriff; to hold kidneys (save those of sheep and swine) to be an agreeable fiction; not to know whereabout the gall grows; to account the circulation of the blood a mere idle whim of Harvey's; to acknowledge no mechanism

not visible; for, once fix the seat of your disorder, and your fancies flux into it like so many bad humours. Those medical gentry choose each his favourite part; one takes the lungs, another the aforesaid liver, and refers to that whatever in the animal economy is amiss. Above all, use exercise, take a little more spirituous liquors, learn to smoke, continue to keep a good conscience, and avoid tamperings with hard terms of art—viscosity, scirrhosity, and those bugbears by which simple patients are scared into their graves. Believe the general sense of the mercantile world, which holds that desks are not deadly. It is the mind, good B. B., and not the limbs, that taints by long sitting. Think of the patience of tailors, think how long the lord chancellor sits, think of the brooding hen! I protest I cannot answer thy sister's kind inquiry; but I judge I shall put forth no second volume. More praise than buy; and T. and H. are not particularly disposed for martyrs. Thou wilt see a funny passage, and yet a true history, of George Dyer's aquatic incursion in the next 'London.' Beware his fate when thou comest to see me at my Colebrook cottage. I have filled my little space with my little thoughts. I wish thee ease on thy sofa, but not too much indulgence on it. From my poor desk, thy fellow-sufferer, this bright November,

"C. L."

Southey went to Colebrook cottage as proposed; the awkwardness of meeting went off in a moment; and the affectionate intimacy, which had lasted for almost twenty years, was renewed, to be interrupted only by death.

CHAPTER XIX.

[1823 to 1825.]

Letters to Ainsworth, Barton, and Coleridge.

Lamb was fond of visiting the universities in the summer vacation, and repeatedly spent his holyday month at Cambridge with his sister. On one of these occasions they met with a little girl who, being, in a manner, alone in the world, engaged their sympathies, and soon riveted their affections. Emma Isola was the daughter of Mr. Charles Isola, who had been one of the esquire bedells of the university; her grand-

father, Agostino Isola, had been compelled to fly from Milan because a friend took up an English book in his apartment which he had carelessly left in view. This good old man numbered among his pupils Gray the poet, Mr. Pitt, and, in his old age, Wordsworth, whom he instructed in the Italian language. His little granddaughter, at the time when she had the good fortune to win the regard of Mr. Lamb, had lost both her parents, and was spending her holydays with an aunt, who lived with a sister of Mr. Ayrton, at whose house Lamb generally played his evening rubber during his stay at Cambridge. The liking which both Lamb and his sister took for the little orphan led to their begging her of her aunt for the next holydays; their regard for her increased; she regularly spent the holydays with them till she left school, and afterward was adopted as a daughter, and lived generally with them until 1833, when she married Mr. Moxon. Lamb was fond of taking long walks in the country, and as Miss Lamb's strength was not always equal to these pedestrian excursions, she became his constant companion in walks which even extended "to the green fields of pleasant Hertfordshire."

About this time Lamb added to his list of friends Mr. Hood, the delightful humorist; Hone, lifted for a short time into political fame by the prosecution of his Parodies, and the signal energy and success of his defence, but now striving by unwearied researches, which were guided by a pure taste and an honest heart, to support a numerous family; and Ainsworth, then a youth, who has since acquired so splendid a reputation as the author of "Rookwood" and "Crichton." Mr. Ainsworth, then resident at Manchester, excited by an enthusiastic admiration of Elia, had sent him some books, for which he thus conveyed his thanks to his unseen friend.

TO MR. AINSWORTH.

"India House, Dec. 9, 1823.

"Dear Sir—I should have thanked you for your books and compliments sooner, but have been waiting for a revise to be sent, which does not come, though I returned the proof on the receipt of your letter. I have read Warner with great pleasure. What an elaborate piece of alliteration and antithesis! why, it must have been a labour far above the most difficult versification. There is a fine simile or picture of Semiramis arming to repel a siege. I do not mean to keep the book, for I suspect you are forming a curious collection, and I do not pretend to anything of the kind. I have not a black-letter book among mine, old Chaucer excepted, and am not bibliomanist enough to like black letter. It is painful to read;

therefore I must insist on returning it at opportunity, not from contumacy and reluctance to be obliged, but because it must suit you better than me. The loss of a present *from* should never exceed the gain of a present *to*. I hold this maxim infallible in the accepting line. I read your magazines with satisfaction. I thoroughly agree with you as to 'The German Faust,' as far as I can do justice to it from an English translation. 'Tis a disagreeable canting tale of seduction, which has nothing to do with the spirit of Faustus—curiosity. Was the dark secret to be explored to end in the seducing a weak girl, which might have been accomplished by earthly agency? When Marlow gives *his* Faustus a mistress, he flies him at Helen, flower of Greece, to be sure, and not at Miss Betsy or Miss Sally Thoughtless.

> 'Cut is the branch that bore the goodly fruit,
> And wither'd is Apollo's laurel tree:
> Faustus is dead.'

"What a noble natural transition from metaphor to plain speaking! as if the figurative had flagged in description of such a loss, and was reduced to tell the fact simply.

"I must now thank you for your very kind invitation. It is not out of prospect that I may see Manchester some day, and then I will avail myself of your kindness. But holydays are scarce things with me, and the laws of attendance are getting stronger and stronger at Leadenhall. But I shall bear it in mind. Meantime, something may (more probably) bring you to town, where I shall be happy to see you. I am always to be found (alas!) at my desk in the forepart of the day.

"I wonder why they do not send the revise. I leave late at office, and my abode lies out of the way, or I should have seen about it. If you are impatient, perhaps a line to the printer, directing him to send it me, at Accountant's Office, may answer. You will see by the scrawl that I only snatch a few minutes from intermitting business.

"Your obliged servant,

"C. Lamb.

"(If I had time I would go over this letter again, and dot all my i's.)"

To Ainsworth, still pressing him to visit Manchester, he sent the following reply.

TO MR. AINSWORTH.

"My dear Sir—You talk of months at a time, and I know not what inducements to visit Manchester, Heaven knows

how gratifying! but I have had my little month of 1823 already. It is all over; and, without incurring a disagreeable favour, I cannot so much as get a single holyday till the season returns with the next year. Even our half-hour's absences from office are set down in a book! Next year, if I can spare a day or two of it, I will come to Manchester, but I have reasons at home against longer absences.

"I am so ill just at present (an illness of my own procuring last night; who is perfect?) that nothing but your very great kindness could make me write. I will bear in mind the letter to W. W., and you shall have it quite in time, before the 12th.

"My aching and confused head warns me to leave off. With a muddled sense of gratefulness, which I shall apprehend more clearly to-morrow,

"I remain, your friend unseen,

"C. L.

"I. H., 29th.

"Will your occasions or inclination bring you to London? It will give me great pleasure to show you everything that Islington can boast, if you know the meaning of that Cockney sound. We have the New River! I am ashamed of this scrawl, but I beg you to accept it for the present. I am full of qualms.

'A fool at fifty is a fool indeed.'"

Bernard Barton still frequently wrote to him; and he did not withhold the wished-for reply even when letter-writing was a burden. The following gives a ludicrous account of his indisposition:—

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Dear B. B.—Do you know what it is to succumb under an insurmountable day-mare—'a whoreson lethargy,' Falstaff calls it, an indisposition to do anything, or to be anything—a total deadness and distaste—a suspension of vitality—an indifference to locality—a numb, soporifical, good-for-nothingness—an ossification all over—an oysterlike insensibility to the passing events—a mind-stupor—a brawny defiance to the needles of a thrusting-in conscience? Did you ever have a very bad cold, with a total irresolution to submit to water-gruel processes? This has been for many weeks my lot and my excuse; my fingers drag heavily over this paper, and, to my thinking, it's three-and-twenty furlongs from hence to the end of this demi-sheet. I have not a thing to say; nothing is of more importance than another; I am flatter than a denial or a

pancake; emptier than Judge ——'s wig when the head is in it; duller than a country stage when the actors are off it; a cipher, an 0! I acknowledge life at all only by an occasional convulsional cough, and a permanent phlegmatic pain in the chest. I am weary of the world, and the world is weary of me. My day is gone into twilight, and I don't think it worth the expense of candles. My wick hath a thief it, but I can't muster courage to snuff it. I inhale suffocation; I can't distinguish veal from mutton; nothing interests me. 'Tis twelve o'clock, and Thurtell is just now coming out upon the New Drop, Jack Ketch alertly tucking up his greasy sleeves to do the last office of mortality, yet cannot I elicit a groan or a moral reflection. If you told me the world would be at an end to-morrow, I should just say, 'will it?' I have not volition enough left to dot my i's, much less to comb my eyebrows; my eyes are set in my head; my brains are gone out to see a poor relation in Moorfields, and they did not say when they'd come back again; my scull is a Grub-street attic to let—not so much as a joint-stool left in it; my hand writes, not I, just as chickens run about a little when their heads are off. Oh for a vigorous fit of gout, of cholic, toothache—an earwig in my auditory, a fly in my visual organs; pain is life—the sharper, the more evidence of life; but this apathy, this death! Did you ever have an obstinate cold—a six or seven weeks' unintermitting chill and suspension of hope, fear, conscience, and everything? Yet do I try all I can to cure it; I try wine, and spirits, and smoking, and snuff in unsparing quantities, but they all only seem to make me worse instead of better. I sleep in a damp room, but it does me no good; I come home late o'nights, but do not find any visible amendment!

"It is just fifteen minutes after twelve; Thurtell is by this time a good way on his journey, baiting at Scorpion, perhaps, Ketch is bargaining for his cast coat and waistcoat; the Jew demurs at first at three half-crowns; but, on consideration that he may get somewhat by showing 'em in the town, finally closes.

"C. L"

Barton took this letter rather too seriously, and Lamb thus sought to remove his friendly anxieties.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"My dear Sir—That peevish letter of mine, which was meant to convey an apology for my incapacity to write, seems to have been taken by you in too serious a light; it was only my way of telling you I had a severe cold The fact is, I

have been insuperably dull and lethargic for many weeks, and cannot rise to the vigour of a letter, much less an essay. The 'London' must do without me for a time, for I have lost all interest about it; and, whether I shall recover it or not, I know not. I will bridle my pen another time, and not teaze and puzzle you with my oddities. I shall begin to feel a little more alive with the spring. Winter is to me (mild or harsh) always a great trial of the spirits. I am ashamed not to have noticed your tribute to Woolman, whom we both love so much. It is done in your good manner. Your friend Taylor called on me some time since, and seems a very amiable man. His last story is painfully fine. His book I 'like;' it is only too stuffed with scripture, too parsonish. The best thing in it is the boy's own story. When I say it is too full of scripture, I mean it is too full of *direct quotations:* no book can have too much of silent scripture in it; but the natural power of a story is diminished when the uppermost purpose of the writer seems to be to recommend something else. You know what Horace says of the *Deus intersit?* I am not able to explain myself—you must do it for me. My sister's part in the 'Leicester School' (about two thirds) was purely her own; as it was (to the same quantity) in the 'Shakspeare Tales' which bears my name. I wrote only the 'Witch Aunt;' the 'First going to Church;' and the final story about 'A little Indian girl' in a ship. Your account of my blackballing amused me. *I think, as Quakers, they did right.* There are many things in my little book hard to be understood. The more I think, the more I am vexed at having puzzled you with that letter; but I have been so out of letter-writing lately that it is a sore effort to sit down to it; and I felt in your debt, and sat down waywardly to pay you in bad money. Never mind my dulness; I am used to long intervals of it. The heavens seem brass to me; then again comes the refreshing shower—

'I have been merry once or twice ere now.'

You said something about Mr. M—— in a late latter, which I believe I did not advert to. I shall be happy to show him my Milton (it is all the show things I have) at any time he will take the trouble of a jaunt to Islington. I do also hope to see Mr. Taylor there some day. Pray say so to both. Coleridge's book is in good part printed, but sticks a little for *more copy.* It bears an unsaleable title, 'Extracts from Bishop Leighton,' but I am confident there will be plenty of good notes in it. * * * * * * *

"Keep your good spirits up, dear B. B., mine will return: they are at present in abeyance; but I am rather lethargic

than miserable. I don't know but a good horsewhip would be more beneficial to me than physic. My head without aching will teach yours to ache. It is well I am getting to the conclusion. I will send a better letter when I am a better man. Let me thank you for your kind concern for me (which, I trust, will have reason soon to be dissipated,) and assure you that it gives me pleasure to hear from you.

"Yours truly,

"C. L.".

The following sufficiently indicate the circumstances under which they were written:—

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Febuary, 1824.

"My dear Sir—Your title of 'Poetic Vigils' arrides me much more than a volume of verse which has no meaning. The motto says nothing, but I cannot suggest a better. I do not like mottoes but when they are singularly felicitous; there is a foppery in them; they are unplain, unquakerish; they are good only where they flow from the title, and are a kind of justification of it. There is nothing about watchings or lucubrations in the one you suggest, no commentary on vigils. By-the-way, a wag would recommend you to the line of Pope,

'Sleepless himself—to give his readers sleep'—

I by no means wish it; but it may explain what I mean, that a neat motto is child of the title. I think 'Poetic Vigils' as short and sweet as can be desired; only have an eye on the proof, that the printer do not substitute *Virgils*, which would ill accord with your modesty of meaning. Your suggested motto is antique enough in spelling and modern enough in phrases—a good modern antique; but the matter of it is germain to the purpose, only supposing the title proposed a vindication of yourself from the presumption of authorship. The first title was liable to this objection—that if you were disposed to change it, and the bookseller insisted on its appearance in two tomes, how oddly it would sound, 'A Volume of Verse in two Volumes, Second Edition,' &c. You see this my wicked intention of curtailing this epistolet by the above device of large margin. But, in truth, the idea of letterizing has been oppressive to me of late, above what your candour gives me credit for. There is Southey, whom I ought to have thanked a fortnight ago for a present of the 'Church Book:' I have never had courage to buckle myself in earnest

even to acknowledge it; and yet I am accounted by some people a good man! How cheap that character is acquired! Pay your debts, don't borrow money, nor twist your kitten's neck off, nor disturb a congregation, &c., your business is done. I know things (for thoughts *are* things) of myself which would make every friend I have fly me as a plague patient. I once set a dog upon a crab's leg that was shoved out under a mass of seaweeds—a pretty little feeler! Oh! pah! how sick I am of that! And a lie, a mean one, I once told. I stink in the midst of respect. I am much hypt. The fact is, my head is heavy, but there is hope; or, if not, I am better than a poor shellfish; not morally, when I set the whelp upon it, but have more blood and spirits. Things may turn up, and I may creep again into a decent opinion of myself. Vanity will return with sunshine. Till when, pardon my neglects, and impute it to the wintry solstice.

"C. LAMB."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Dear B. B.—I am sure I cannot fill a letter, though I should disfurnish my scull to do it; but you expect something, and shall have a notelet. Is Sunday, not divinely speaking, but humanly and holydaisically, a blessing? Without its institution, would our rugged taskmasters have given us a leisure day, so often, think you, as once in a month? or, if it had not been instituted, might not they have given us every sixth day? Solve me this problem:—If we are to go three times a day to church, why has Sunday slipped into the notion of a *holyday?* A HOLY-day I grant it. The Puritans, I have read in Southey's book, knew the distinction. They made people observe Sunday rigorously, would not let a nursery-maid walk out in the fields with children for recreation on that day. But, *then* —they gave the people a holyday from all sorts of work every second Tuesday. This was giving to the two Cæsars that which was *his* respective. Wise, beautiful, thoughtful, generous legislators! Would Wilberforce give us our Tuesdays? No! he would turn the six days into sevenths,

> 'And those three smiling seasons of the year
> Into a Russian winter.'
>
> *Old Play.*

"I am sitting opposite a person who is making strange distortions with the gout, which is not unpleasant—to me at least. What is the reason we do not sympathize with pain short of some terrible surgical operation? Hazlitt, who boldly says all he feels, avows that he not only does not pity sick people, but he hates them. I obscurely recognise his mean-

ing. Pain is probably too selfish a consideration, too simply a consideration of self attention. We pity poverty, loss of friends, &c.—more complex things, in which the sufferer's feelings are associated with others. This is a rough thought, suggested by the presence of gout; I want head to extricate and plane it. What is all this to your letter? I felt it to be a good one; but my turn, when I write at all, is perversely to travel out of the record, so that my letters are anything but answers. So you still want a motto? You must not take my ironical one, because your book, I take it, is too serious for it. Bickerstaff might have used it for *his* lucubrations. What do you think of Religio-Tremuli? or Tremebundi? (for a title.) There is Religio-Medici and Religio-Laici. But perhaps the volume is not quite Quakerish enough, or exclusively so, for it. Your own 'Vigils' is perhaps the best. While I have space, let me congratulate you on the return of spring, what a summer spring too! all those qualms about the dog and crayfish melt before it. I am going to be happy and *vain* again.

"A hasty farewell.

"C. LAMB"

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"July 7th, 1824.

"Dear B. B.—I have been suffering under a severe inflammation of the eyes, notwithstanding which I resolutely went through your pretty volume at once, which I dare pronounce in no ways inferior to former lucubrations. 'Abroad' and 'lord' are vile rhymes notwithstanding; and, if you count, you will wonder how many times you have repeated the word *unearthly;* thrice in one poem. It is become a slang word with the bards; avoid in future lustily. 'Time' is fine, but there are better a good deal, I think. The volume does not lie by me; and, after a long day's smarting fatigue, which has almost put out my eyes (not blind, however, to your merits), I dare not trust myself with long writing. The verses to Bloomfield are the sweetest in the collection. Religion is sometimes lugged in, as if it did not come naturally. I will go over carefully when I get my seeing, and exemplify. You have also too much singing metre, such as requires no deep ear to make; lilting measure, in which you have done Woolman injustice. Strike at less superficial melodies. The piece on Naylor is more to my fancy.

"My eye runs waters. But I will give you a fuller account some day. The book is a very pretty one in more than

one sense. The decorative harp, perhaps, is too ostentatious; a simple pipe preferable.

"Farewell, and many thanks.

"C. LAMB."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"August, 1824.

"Dear B. B.—The 'Prometheus' *unbound* is a capital story. The literary rogue! What if you had ordered 'Elfrida' in *sheets!* she'd have been sent up, I warrant you. Or bid him clasp his Bible (*i. e.*, to his bosom), he'd have clapped on a brass clasp, no doubt.

"I can no more understand Shelley than you can. His poetry is 'thin sown with profit or delight.' Yet I must point to your notice a poem conceived and expressed with a witty delicacy. It is that addressed to one who hated him, but who could not persuade him to hate *him* again. His coyness to the other's passion (for hatred demands a return as much as love, and starves without it) is most arch and pleasant. Pray like it very much. For his theories and nostrums, they are oracular enough, but I either comprehend 'em not, or there is 'miching malice' and mischief in 'em; but, for the most part, ringing with their own emptiness. Hazlitt said well of 'em—'Many are the wiser and better for reading Shakspeare, but nobody was ever wiser or better for reading Shelley.' I wonder you will sow your correspondence on so barren a ground as I am, that make such poor returns. But my head aches at the bare prospect of letter-writing. I wish all the ink in the ocean dried up, and would listen to the quills shivering up in the candle-flame like parching martyrs. The same indisposition to write has stopped my 'Elias,' but you will see a futile effort in the next number, 'wrung from me with slow pain.' I am dreadfully indolent. To have to do anything, to order a new coat, for instance, though my old buttons are shelled like beans, is an effort. My pen stammers like my tongue. What cool heads those old enditers of folios must have had! what a mortified pulse! Well; once more I throw myself on your mercy. Wishing peace to thy new dwelling,

"C. LAMB."

Mr. Barton, having requested of Lamb some verses for his daughter's album, received the following, with the accompanying letter beneath, on 30th November in this year. Surely the neat loveliness of female Quakerism never received before so delicate a compliment!

THE ALBUM OF LUCY BARTON.

Little book, surnamed of *white*,
Clean as yet, and fair to sight,
Keep thy attribution right.

Never disproportion'd scrawl,
Ugly, old (that's worse than all),
On thy maiden clearness fall!

In each letter here design'd,
Let the reader emblem'd find
Neatness of the owner's mind.

Gilded margins count a sin;
Let thy leaves attraction win
By the golden rules within;

Sayings fetch'd from sages old;
Laws which Holy Writ unfold,
Worthy to be graved in gold:

Lighter fancies; not excluding
Blameless wit, with nothing rude in,
Sometimes mildly interluding

Amid strains of graver measure:
Virtue's self hath oft her pleasure
In sweet Muses' groves of leisure.

Riddles dark, perplexing sense;
Darker meanings of offence;
What but *shades*—be banish'd hence!

Whitest thoughts, in whitest dress,
Candid meanings best express
Mind of quiet Quakeress."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Dear B. B.—'I am ill at these numbers;' but, if the above be not too mean to have a place in thy daughter's sanctum, take them with pleasure.

"I began on another sheet of paper; and, just as I had penned the second line of stanza two, an ugly blot fell to illustrate my counsel. I am sadly given to blot, and modern blotting-paper gives no redress; it only smears, and makes it worse. The only remedy is scratching out, which gives it a clerkish look. The most innocent blots are made with red ink, and are rather ornamental. Marry, they are not always to be distinguished from the effusions of a cut finger! Well, I hope and trust thy *tick doleru*, or however you spell it, is vanished, for I have frightful impressions of that tick, and do altogether hate it as an unpaid score or the tick of a death watch. I take it to be a species of Vitus's dance (I omit the sanctity, writing to one of the men called friends). I knew a

young lady who could dance no other; she danced it through life, and very queer and fantastic were her steps.

"Heaven bless thee from such measures, and keep thee from the foul-fiend, who delights to lead after false fires in the night, Flibbertigibbet, that gives the web, and I forget what else.

"From my den, as Bunyan has it.

"C. L."

Here is a humorous expostulation with Coleridge for carrying away a book from the cottage in the absence of its inmates.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Dear C.—Why will you make your visits, which should give pleasure, matter of regret to your friends? You never come but you take away some folio that is part of my existence. With a great deal of difficulty I was made to comprehend the extent of my loss. My maid, Becky, brought me a dirty bit of paper, which contained her description of some book which Mr. Coleridge had taken away. It was 'Luster's Tables,' which, for some time, I could not make out. 'What! has he carried away any of the *tables*, Becky?' 'No, it wasn't any tables, but it was a book that he called Luster's Tables.' I was obliged to search personally among my shelves, and a huge fissure suddenly disclosed to me the true nature of the damage I had sustained. That book, C., you should not have taken away, for it is not mine; it is the property of a friend, who does not know its value, nor, indeed, have I been very sedulous in explaining to him the estimate of it; but was rather contented in giving a sort of corroboration to a hint that he let fall, as to its being suspected to be not genuine; so that, in all probability, it would have fallen to me as a deodand; not but I am as sure it is Luther's as I am sure that Jack Bunyan wrote the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' but it was not for me to pronounce upon the validity of testimony that had been disputed by learneder clerks than I; so I quietly let it occupy the place it had usurped upon my shelves, and should never have thought of issuing an ejectment against it; for why should I be so bigoted as to allow rites of hospitality to none but my own books, children, &c.? a species of egotism I abhor from my heart. No; let 'em all snug together, Hebrews and Proselytes of the gate; no selfish partiality of mine shall make distinction between them; I charge no warehouse-room for my friends' commodities; they are welcome to come and stay as long as they like without paying rent. I have several such

strangers that I treat with more than Arabian courtesy; there's a copy of More's fine poem, which is none of mine, but I cherish it as my own; I am none of those churlish landlords that advertise the goods to be taken away in ten days' time, or then to be sold to pay expenses. So you see I had no right to lend you that book; I may lend you my own books, because it is at my own hazard, but it is not honest to hazard a friend's property; I always make that distinction. I hope you will bring it with you, or send it by Hartley; or he can bring that, and you the 'Polemical Discourses,' and come and eat some atoning mutton with us one of these days shortly. We are engaged two or three Sundays deep, but always dine at home on week-days at half past four. So come all four—men and books, I mean—my third shelf (northern compartment) from the top has two devilish gaps, where you have knocked out its two eye-teeth.

"Your wronged friend,

"C. LAMB."

The following preface to a letter, addressed to Miss Hutchinson, Mrs. Wordsworth's sister, playing on the pretended defects of Miss Lamb's handwriting, is one of those artifices of affection which, not finding scope in eulogistic epithets, takes refuge in apparent abuse. Lamb himself, at this time, wrote a singularly neat hand, having greatly improved in the India House, where he also learned to flourish—a facility he took a pride in, and sometimes indulged; but his flourishes (wherefore it would be too curious to inquire) almost always shaped themselves into a visionary corkscrew, 'never made to draw.'

TO MISS HUTCHINSON.

"Dear Miss H.—Mary has such an invincible reluctance to any epistolary exertion, that I am sparing her a mortification by taking the pen from her. The plain truth is, she writes such a pimping, mean, detestable hand, that she is ashamed of the formation of her letters. There is an essential poverty and abjectness in the frame of them. They look like begging letters. And then she is sure to omit a most substantial word in the second draught (for she never ventures an epistle without a foul copy first), which is obliged to be interlined; which spoils the neatest epistle, you know Her figures, 1, 2, 3, 4, &c., where she has occasion to express numerals, as in the date [25th March, 1824], are not figures, but figurantes; and the combined posse go staggering up and down shameless as drunkards in the daytime. It is no better when she rules her paper. Her lines 'are not less er-

ring' than her words. A sort of unnatural parallel lines, that are perpetually threatening to meet; which, you know, is quite contrary to Euclid. Her very blots are not bold like this [here a large blot is inserted], but poor smears, half left in and half scratched out, with another smear left in their place. I like a clear letter. A bold free hand and a fearless flourish. Then she has always to go through them (a second operation) to dot her *i*'s and cross her *t*'s. I don't think she can make a corkscrew if she tried, which has such a fine effect at the end or middle of an epistle, and fills up.

"There is a corkscrew! One of the best I ever drew. By-the-way, what incomparable whiskey that was of M.'s! But, if I am to write a letter, let me begin, and not stand flourishing like a fencer at a fair.

"It gives me great pleasure," &c., &c., &c.

[The letter now begins.]

What a strange mingling of humour and solemn truth is there in the following reflection on Fauntleroy's fate, in a letter addressed to Bernard Barton!

TO BERNARD BARTON.

* * * * * *

"And now, my dear sir, trifling apart, the gloomy catastrophe of yesterday morning prompts a sadder vein. The fate of the unfortunate Fauntleroy makes me, whether I will or no, to cast reflecting eyes around on such of my friends as, by a parity of situation, are exposed to a similarity of temptation. My very style seems to myself to become more impressive than usual with the charge of them. Who that standeth knoweth but he may yet fall? Your hands as yet, I am most willing to believe, have never deviated into other's property. You think it impossible that you could ever commit so heinous an offence; but so thought Fauntleroy once; so have thought many besides him, who at last have expiated as he hath done. You are as yet upright; but you are a banker, or, at least, the next thing to it. I feel the delicacy of the subject; but cash must pass through your hands, sometimes to a great amount. If in an unguarded hour—but I will hope better. Consider the scandal it will bring upon those of your persuasion. Thousands would go to see a Quaker hanged that would be indifferent to the fate of a Presbyterian or an Anabaptist. Think of the effect it would have on the sale of your poems alone, not to mention higher considerations! I tremble, I am sure, at myself, when I think that so many poor victims of the law, at one time of their life,

made as sure of never being hanged as I, in my own pre sumption, am ready, too ready, to do myself. What are we better than they? Do we come into the world with different necks? Is there any distinctive mark under our left ears? Are we unstrangulable, I ask you? Think on these things. I am shocked sometimes at the shape of my own fingers, not for their resemblance to the ape tribe (which is something), but for the exquisite adaptation of them to the purposes of picking, fingering, &c.

"No one that is so framed, I maintain it, but should tremble. C. L."

In the year 1824 one of Lamb's last ties to the theatre, as a scene of present enjoyment, was severed. Munden, the rich peculiarities of whose acting he has embalmed in one of the choicest "Essays of Elia," left the stage in the mellowness of his powers. His relish for Munden's acting was almost a new sense; he did not compare him with the old comedians, as having common qualities with them, but regarded him as altogether of a different and original style. On the last night of his appearance Lamb was very desirous to attend, but every place in the boxes had long been secured; and Lamb was not strong enough to stand the tremendous rush, by enduring which, alone, he could hope to obtain a place in the pit; when Munden's gratitude for his exquisite praise anticipated his wish, by providing for him and Miss Lamb places in a corner of the orchestra, close to the stage. The play of the "Poor Gentleman," in which Munden played "Sir Robert Bramble," had concluded, and the audience were impatiently waiting for the farce, in which the great comedian was to delight them for the last time, when my attention was suddenly called to Lamb by Miss Kelly, who sat with my party far withdrawn into the obscurity of one of the upper boxes, but overlooking the radiant hollow which waved below us, to our friend. In his hand, directly beneath the line of stage lights, glistened a huge porter pot, which he was draining; while the broad face of old Munden was seen thrust out from the door by which the musicians enter, watching the close of the draught, when he might receive and hide the portentous beaker from the gaze of the admiring neighbours. Some unknown benefactor had sent four pots of stout to keep up the veteran's heart during his last trial; and, not able to drink them all, he bethought him of Lamb; and without considering the wonder which would be excited in the brilliant crowd who surrounded him, conveyed himself the cordial chalice to Lamb's parched lips. At the end of the same farce Munden found himself unable

to deliver, from memory, a short and elegant address which one of his sons had written for him; but, provided against accidents, took it from his pocket, wiped his eyes, put on his spectacles, read it, and made his last bow. This was, perhaps, the last night when Lamb took a hearty interest in the present business scene; for though he went now and then to the theatre to gratify Miss Isola, or to please an author who was his friend, his real stage henceforth only spread itself out in the selectest chambers of his memory.

CHAPTER XV.

[1825.]

Lamb's Emancipation from the India House.

THE year 1825 is marked by one of the principal events in Lamb's uneventful life—his retirement from the drudgery of the desk, with a pension equal to two thirds of his now liberal salary. The following letters vividly exhibit his hopes and his apprehensions before he received this noble boon from the East India Company, and his bewilderment of pleasure when he found himself in reality free. He has recorded his feelings in one of the most beautiful of his "Last Essays of Elia," entitled "The Superannuated Man;" but it will be interesting to contemplate them, "living as they rose," in the unstudied letters to which this chapter is devoted.

A new series of the London Magazine was commenced with this year, in an increased size and price; but the spirit of the work had evaporated, as often happens to periodical works, as the store of rich fancies with which its contributors had begun was in a measure exhausted. Lamb contributed a "Memoir of Liston," who occasionally enlivened Lamb's evening parties with his society; and who, besides the interest which he derived from his theatrical fame, was recommended to Lamb by the cordial admiration he expressed for Munden, whom he used to imitate in a style delightfully blending his own humour with that of his some time rival. The "Memoir" is altogether a fiction—of which, as Lamb did not think it worthy of republication, I will only give a specimen. After a ludicrously improbable account of his hero's pedigree, birth, and early habits, Lamb thus represents his entrance on the life of an actor.

"We accordingly find him shortly after making his *début*, as it is called, upon the Norwich boards, in the season of that year, being then in the twenty-second year of his age. Having a natural bent to tragedy, he chose the part of 'Pyrrhus' in the 'Distressed Mother,' to Sally Parker's 'Hermione. We find him afterward as 'Barnwell,' 'Altamont,' 'Chamont,' &c.; but, as if nature had destined him to the sock, an unavoidable infirmity absolutely discapacitated him for tragedy. His person, at this latter period of which I have been speaking, was graceful, and even commanding; his countenance set to gravity; he had the power of arresting the attention of an audience at first sight almost beyond any other tragic actor. But he could not hold it. To understand this obstacle, we must go back a few years, to those appalling reveries at Charnwood. Those illusions, which had vanished before the dissipation of a less recluse life and more free society, now in his solitary tragic studies, and amid the intense calls upon feeling incident to tragic acting, came back upon him with tenfold vividness. In the midst of some most pathetic passage —the parting of Jaffier with his dying friend, for instance—he would suddenly be surprised with a violent fit of horse laughter. While the spectators were all sobbing before him with emotion, suddenly one of those grotesque faces would peep out upon him, and he could not resist the impulse. A timely excuse once or twice served his purpose, but no audiences could be expected to bear repeatedly this violation of the continuity of feeling. He describes them (the illusions) as so many demons haunting him, and paralyzing every effort. Even now, I am told, he cannot recite the famous soliloquy in Hamlet, even in private, without immoderate bursts of laughter. However, what he had not force of reason sufficient to overcome, he had good sense enough to turn to emolument, and determined to make a commodity of his distemper. He prudently exchanged the buskin for the sock, and the illusions instantly ceased; or, if they occurred for a short season, by their very co-operation added a zest to his comic vein; some of his most catching faces being (as he expresses it) little more than transcripts and copies of those extraordinary phantasmata."

He completed his half century on the day when he addressed the following letter

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"10th February, 1825.

"Dear B. B.—The 'Spirit of the Age' is by Hazlitt, the characters of Coleridge, &c., he had done better in former

publications, the praise and the abuse much stronger, &c., but the new ones are capitally done. Horne Tooke is a matchless portrait. My advice is, to borrow it rather than buy it. I have it; he has laid too many colours on my likeness; but I have had so much injustice done me in my own name, that I make a rule of accepting as much over-measure to Elia as gentlemen think proper to bestow. Lay it on, and spare not. Your gentleman brother sets my mouth a watering after liberty. Oh that I were kicked out of Leadenhall, with every mark of indignity, and a competence in my fob. The birds of the air would not be so free as I should. How I would prance and curvet it, and pick up cowslips, and ramble about purposeless as an infant! The author-nometer is a good fancy. I have caused great speculation in the dramatic (not thy) world by a lying 'Life of Liston,' all pure invention. The town has swallowed it, and it is copied into newspapers, playbills, &c., as authentic. You do not know the droll, and, probably, missed reading the article (in our first number, new series). A life more improbable for him to have lived could not be easily invented. But your rebuke, coupled with 'Dreams on J. Bunyan,' checks me. I'd rather do more in my favourite way, but feel dry. I must laugh sometimes. I am poor Hypochondriachus, and *not* Liston.

"I have been harassed more than usually at office, which has stopped my correspondence lately. I write with a confused aching head, and you must accept this apology for a letter.

"I will do something soon, if I can, *as a peace-offering to the queen of the East Angles*—something she shan't scold about.

"For the present, farewell.

"Thine, C. L."

Freedom now gleamed on him, and he became restless with the approach of deliverance.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"March, 1825.

"Dear B. B.—I have had no impulse to write, or attend to any single object but myself for weeks past—my single self, I by myself—I. I am sick of hope deferred. The grand wheel is in agitation that is to turn up my fortune; but round it rolls, and will turn up nothing. I have a glimpse of freedom, of becoming a gentleman at large; but I am put off from day to day. I have offered my resignation, and it is neither accepted nor rejected. Eight weeks am I kept in this fearful suspense. Guess what an absorbing state I feel it. I am

not conscious of the existence of friends present or absent. The East India Directors alone can be that thing to me or not. I have just learned that nothing will be decided this week. Why the next? Why any week? It has fretted me into an itch of the fingers; I rub 'em against paper, and write to you, rather than not allay this scorbuta.

"While I can write, let me abjure you to have no doubts of IRVING. Let Mr. M—— drop his disrespect. Irving has prefixed a dedication (of a missionary subject, first part) to Coleridge, the most beautiful, cordial, and sincere. He there acknowledges his obligation to S. T. C. for his knowledge of Gospel truths, the nature of a Christian Church, &c., to the talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (at whose Gamaliel feet he sits weekly) rather than to that of all the men living. This from him, the great dandled and petted sectarian—to a religious character so equivocal in the worlds eye as that of S. T. C., so foreign to the kirk's estimate—can this man be a quack? The language is as affecting as the spirit of the dedication. Some friend told him, 'This dedication will do you no good,' *i. e.*, not in the world's repute, or with your own people. 'That is a reason for doing it,' quoth Irving.

"I am thoroughly pleased with him. He is firm, outspeaking, intrepid, and docile as a pupil of Pythagoras. You must like him.

"Yours, in tremours of painful hope,

"C. LAMB."

These tremours of painful hope were soon changed into certain joy. The following letters contain his own expressions of delight on his deliverance, as conveyed to several of his dearest friends. In the first his happiness is a little checked by the death of Mr. Monkhouse, a relation of Mrs. Wordsworth, who had gradually won Lamb's affections, and who nobly deserved them.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Colebrook Cottage, 6th April, 1825.

"Dear Wordsworth—I have been several times meditating a letter to you concerning the good thing which has befallen me, but the thought of poor Monkhouse came across me. He was one that I had exulted in the prospect of congratulating me. He and you were to have been the first participators, for, indeed, it has been ten weeks since the first motion of it. Here am I, then, after thirty-three years' slavery, sitting in my own room at eleven o'clock this finest of all April mornings, a freed man, with 441*l.* a year for the remainder of my life,

live I as long as John Dennis, who outlived his annuity and starved at ninety: 441*l.*, *i. e.*, 450*l.*, with a deduction of 9*l.* for a provision secured to my sister, she being surviver, the pension guaranteed by Act Georgii Tertii, &c.

"I came home FOR EVER on Tuesday in last week. The incomprehensibleness of my condition overwhelmed me. It was like passing from life into eternity. Every year to be as long as three, *i. e.*, to have three times as much real time—time that is my own, in it! I wandered about thinking I was happy, but feeling I was not. But that tumultuousness is passing off, and I begin to understand the nature of the gift. Holydays, even the annual month, were always uneasy joys with their conscious fugitiveness; the craving after making the most of them. Now, when all is holyday, there are no holydays. I can sit at home, in rain or shine, without a restless impulse for walkings. I am daily steadying, and shall soon find it as natural to me to be my own master as it has been irksome to have had a master. Mary wakes every morning with an obscure feeling that some good has happened to us.

"—— and ——, after their releasements, describe the shock of their emancipation much as I feel mine. But it hurt their frames. I eat, drink, and sleep sound as ever. I lay no anxious schemes for going hither and thither, but take things as they occur. Yesterday I excursioned twenty miles; to-day I write a few letters. Pleasuring was for fugitive playdays, mine are fugitive only in the sense that life is fugitive. Freedom and life coexistent!

"At the foot of such a call upon you for gratulation, I am ashamed to advert to that melancholy event. Monkhouse was a character I learned to love slowly, but it grew upon me, yearly, monthly, daily. What a chasm has it made in our pleasant parties! His noble friendly face was always coming before me, till this hurrying event in my life came, and, for the time, has absorbed all interest; in fact, it has shaken me a little. My old desk companions, with whom I have had such merry hours, seem to reproach me for removing my lot from among them. They were pleasant creatures; but to the anxieties of business, and a weight of possible worse ever impending, I was not equal. Indeed, this last winter I was jaded out—winters were always worse than other parts of the year, because the spirits are worse, and I had no daylight. In summer I had daylight evenings. The relief was hinted to me from a superior power when I, poor slave, had not a hope but that I must wait another seven years with Jacob—and lo! the Rachel which I coveted is brought to me.

"Have you read the noble dedication of Irving's 'Mission-

ary Orations' to S. T. C.? Who shall call this man a quack hereafter? What the kirk will think of it neither I nor Irving care. When somebody suggested to him that it would not be likely to do him good, videlicet, among his own people 'That is a reason for doing it,' was his noble answer. That Irving thinks he has profited mainly by S. T. C., I have no doubt. The very style of the dedication shows it.

"Communicate my news to Southey, and beg his pardon for my being so long acknowledging his kind present of the 'Church,' which circumstances, having no reference to himself, prevented at the time. Assure him of my deep respect and friendliest feelings.

"Divide the same, or rather each take the whole to you—I mean you and all yours. To Miss Hutchinson I must write separate.

"Farewell! and end at last, long selfish letter!

"C. LAMB."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Dear B. B.—My spirits are so tumultuary with the novelty of my recent emancipation, that I have scarce steadiness of hand, much more mind, to compose a letter. I am free, B. B.—free as air!

'The little bird that wings the sky
Knows no such liberty.'

I was set free on Tuesday in last week at four o'clock. I came home for ever!

"I have been describing my feelings as well as I can to Wordsworth in a long letter, and don't care to repeat. Take it briefly, that for a few days I was painfully oppressed by so mighty a change, but it is becoming daily more natural to me. I went and sat among 'em all at my old thirty-three-years' desk yester morning; and, deuse take me, if I had not yearnings at leaving all my old pen-and-ink fellows, merry, sociable lads, at leaving them in the lurch, fag, fag, fag! The comparison of my own superior felicity gave me anything but pleasure.

"B. B., I would not serve another seven years for seven hundred thousand pounds! I have got 440*l.* nett for life, sanctioned by act of parliament, with a provision for Mary if she survives me. I will live another fifty years; or, if I live but ten, they will be thirty, reckoning the quantity of real time in them, *i. e.*, the time that is a man's own. Tell me how you like 'Barbara S.;'* will it be received in atonement

* The true heroine of this beautiful story is still living, though she has left

for the foolish 'Vision'—I mean by the lady? *Apropos*, I never saw Mrs. Crawford in my life; nevertheless, it's all true of somebody.

"Address me, in future, Colebrooke cottage, Islington. I am really nervous (but that will wear off), so take this brief announcement.

"Yours, truly, C. L."

TO MISS HUTCHINSON.

"Dear Miss Hutchinson—You want to know all about my jail delivery. Take it, then. About twelve weeks since I had a sort of intimation that a resignation might be well accepted from me. This was a kind bird's whisper. On that hint I spake. G—— and T—— furnished me with certificates of wasted health and sore spirits—not much more than the truth, I promise you—and for nine weeks I was kept in a fright. I had gone too far to recede, and they might take advantage, and dismiss me with a much less sum than I had reckoned on. However, liberty came at last, with a liberal provision. I have given up what I could have lived on in the country; but have enough to live here by management and scribbling occasionally. I would not go back to my prison for seven years longer for 10,000*l.* a year—seven years after one is fifty is no trifle to give up. Still I am a young *pensioner*, and have served but thirty-three years; very few, I assure you, retire before forty, forty-five, or fifty years' service.

"You will ask how I bear my freedom. Faith, for some days I was staggered; could not comprehend the magnitude of my deliverance; was confused, giddy; knew not whether I was on my head or my heel, as they say. But those giddy feelings have gone away, and my weather-glass stands at a degree or two above

CONTENT.

"I go about quiet, and have none of that restless hunting after recreation, which made holydays formerly uneasy joys. All being holydays, I feel as if I had none, as they do in heaven, where 'tis all red-letter days. I have a kind letter from the Wordsworths, *congratulatory* not a little. It is a damp, I do assure you, amid all my prospects, that I can receive *none* from a quarter upon which I had calculated, almost more than from any, upon receiving congratulations. I had grown to like poor Monkhouse more and more. I do not es-

the stage. It is enough to make a severer Quaker than B. B. feel "that there is some soul of goodness" in players.

teem a soul living or not living more warmly than I had grow to esteem and value him. But words are vain. We have none of us to count upon many years. That is the only cure for sad thoughts. If only some died, and the rest were permanent on earth, what a thing a friend's death would be then!

"I must take leave, having put off answering a load of letters to this morning, and this, alas! is the first. Our kindest remembrances to Mrs. Monkhouse,

"And believe us yours most truly,

"C. LAMB.

"18th April, 1825."

In this summer Lamb and his sister paid a long visit to Enfield, which induced their removing thither some time afterward. The following letter is addressed thence

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"19th August, 1825.

"Dear Southey—You'll know who this letter comes from by opening slap dash upon the text, as in the good old times. I never could come into the custom of envelopes; 'tis a modern foppery; the Plinian correspondence gives no hint of such. In singleness of sheet and meaning, then, I thank you for your little book. I am ashamed to add a codicil of thanks for your 'Book of the Church.' I scarce feel competent to give an opinion of the latter; I have not read enough of that kind to venture at it. I can only say the fact, that I have read it with attention and interest. Being, as you know, not quite a churchman, I felt a jealousy at the Church taking to herself the whole deserts of Christianity, Catholic and Protestant, from Druid extirpation downward. I call all good Christians the Church, Capillarians and all. But I am in too light a humour to touch these matters. May all our churches flourish! Two things staggered me in the poem (and one of them staggered both of us). I cannot away with a beautiful series of verses, as I protest they are, commencing 'Jenner.' 'Tis like a choice banquet opened with a pill or an electuary—physic stuff. T'other is, we cannot make out how Edith should be no more than ten years old. By'r Lady, we had taken her to be some sixteen or upward. We suppose you have only chosen the round number for the metre. Or poem and dedication may be both older than they pretend to; but, then, some hint might have been given; for, as it stands, it may only serve some day to puzzle the parish reckoning. But, without inquiring further (for 'tis ungracious to look into a lady's years), the dedication is eminently pleasing and tender,

and we wish Edith May Southey joy of it. Something, too, struck us as if we had heard of the death of John May. A John May's death was a few years since in the papers. We think the tale one of the quietest, prettiest things we have seen. You have been temperate in the use of localities, which generally spoil poems laid in exotic regions. You mostly cannot stir out (in such things) for hummingbirds and fireflies. A tree is a magnolia, &c

> 'Can I but like the truly Catholic spirit?
> Blame as thou mayst the papist's erring creed'—

which, and other passages, brought me back to the old Anthology days, and the admonitory lesson to 'Dear George' on 'The Vesper Bell,' a little poem which retains its first hold upon me strangely.

"'The compliment to the translatress is daintly conceived Nothing is choicer in that sort of writing than to bring in some remote, impossible parallel—as between a great empress and the inobtrusive quiet soul who digged her noiseless way so perseveringly through that rugged Paraguay mine. How she Dobrizhoffered it all out, it puzzles my slender Latinity to conjecture. Why do you seem to sanction Landor's allegorizing away of honest Quixote! He may as well say Strap is meant to symbolize the Scottish nation before the Union, and Random since that act of dubious issue; or that Partridge means the Mystical Man, and Lady Bellaston typifies the Woman upon Many Waters. Gebir, indeed, may mean the state of the hop-markets last month, for anything I know to the contrary. That all Spain overflowed with romancical books (as Madge Newcastle calls them) was no reason that Cervantes should not smile at the matter of them; nor even a reason that, in another mood, he might not multiply them, deeply as he was tinctured with the essence of them. Quixote is the father of gentle ridicule, and, at the same time, the very depository and treasury of chivalry and highest notions. Marry, when somebody persuaded Cervantes that he meant only fun, and put him upon writing that unfortunate second part, with the confederacies of that unworthy duke and most contemptible duchess, Cervantes sacrificed his instinct to his understanding.

"We got your little book but last night, being at Enfield, to which place we came about a month since, and are having quiet holydays. Mary walks her twelve miles a day some days, and I my twenty on others. 'Tis all holyday with me now, you know. The change works admirably.

"For literary news, in my poor way, I have a one-act farce

going to be acted at Haymarket; but when? is the question. 'Tis an extravaganza, and like enough to follow Mr. H. 'The London Magazine' has shifted its publishers once more, and I shall shift myself out of it. It is fallen. My ambition is not at present higher than to write nonsense for the play-houses, to eke out a something contracted income. *Tempus erat.* There was a time, my dear Cornwallis, when the Muse, &c. But I am now in Mac Flecno's predicament—

'Promised a play, and dwindled to a farce.'

"Coleridge is better (was, at least, a few weeks since) than he has been for years. His accomplishing his book at last has been a source of vigour to him. We are on a half visit to his friend Allsop, at a Mrs. Leishman's, Enfield, but expect to be at Colebrooke cottage in a week or so, where, or anywhere, I shall be always most happy to receive tidings from you. G. Dyer is in the height of an uxorious paradise. His honeymoon will not wane till he wax cold. Never was a more happy pair, since Acme and Septimius, and longer. Farewell, with many thanks, dear S. Our loves to all round your Wrekin.

"Your old friend,
"C. LAMB."

The farce referred to in this letter was founded on Lamb's essay "On the Inconvenience of being Hanged." It was, perhaps, too slight for the stage, and never was honoured by a trial; but was ultimately published in "Blackwood's Magazine."

CHAPTER XVI.

[1826 to 1828.]

Letters to Robinson, Carey, Coleridge, Patmore, Procter, and Barton.

WHEN the first enjoyment of freedom was over, it may be doubted whether Lamb was happier for the change. He lost a grievance on which he could lavish all the fantastical exaggeration of a sufferer without wounding the feelings of any individual, and perhaps the loss was scarcely compensated by the listless leisure which it brought him. Whenever the facile kindness of his disposition permitted, he fled

from those temptations of society, which he could only avoid by flight; and his evening hours of solitude were hardly so sweet as when they were the reliefs and resting-places of his mind—"glimpses which might make him less forlorn" of the world of poetry and romance. His mornings were chiefly occupied in long walks, sometimes extending to ten or twelve miles, in which at this time he was accompanied by a noble dog, the property of Mr. Hood, to whose humours Lamb became almost a slave, and who at last acquired so portentous an ascendency, that Lamb requested his friend Mr. Patmore to take him under his care.* At length the desire of assisting Mr. Hone in his struggle to support his family by antiquarian research and modern pleasantry, renewed to him the blessing of regular labour; he began the task of reading through the glorious heap of dramas collected at the British Museum under the title of the "Garrick Plays," to glean scenes of interest and beauty for the work of his friend; and the work of kindness brought with it its own reward.

"It is a sort of office work to me," says Lamb, in a letter to Barton; "hours ten to four the same. It does me good. Men must have regular occupation that have been used to it."

The Christmas of 1825 was a melancholy season for Lamb. He had always from a boy spent Christmas in the Temple with Mr. Norris, an officer of the Inner Temple, and this Christmas was made wretched by the last illness of his oldest friend. Anxious to excite the sympathy of the Benchers of the Inn for the survivers, Lamb addressed the following letter to a friend as zealous as himself in all generous offices, in order that he might show it to some of the Benchers.

* The following allusion to Lamb's subservience to Dash is extracted from one of a series of papers, written in a most cordial spirit, and with great characteristic power, by the friend to whom Dash was assigned, which appeared in the "Court Magazine." "During these interminable rambles, heretofore pleasant in virtue of their profound loneliness and freedom from restraint, Lamb made himself a perfect slave to the dog, whose habits were of the most extravagantly errant nature; for, generally speaking, the creature was half a mile off from his companion either before or behind, scouring the fields or roads in all directions, scampering up or down 'all manner of streets,' and leaving Lamb in a perfect fever of irritation and annoyance; for he was afraid of losing the dog when it was out of sight, and yet could not persuade himself to keep it *in* sight for a moment by curbing its roving spirit. Dash knew Lamb's weakness in these particulars as well as he did himself, and took a due doglike advantage of it. In the Regent's Park, in particular, Dash had his master completely at his mercy; for the moment they got into the ring, he used to get through the paling on to the greensward, and disappear for a quarter or half an hour together, knowing perfectly well that Lamb did not dare move from the spot where he (Dash) had disappeared till such time as he thought proper to show himself again. And they used to take this particular walk much oftener than they otherwise would, precisely because Dash liked it and Lamb did not." Under his second master we learn from the same source that Dash "subsided into the best bred and best behaved of his species."

TO MR. H. C. ROBINSON.

"Colebrooke Row, Islington, Saturday, 20th Jan., 1826.

"Dear Robinson—I called upon you this morning, and found you were gone to visit a dying friend. I had been upon a like errand. Poor Norris has been lying dying for now almost a week, such is the penalty we pay for having enjoyed a strong constitution! Whether he knew me or not, I know not; or whether he saw me through his poor glazed eyes; but the group I saw about him I shall not forget. Upon the bed or about it were assembled his wife and two daughters, and poor deaf Richard, his son, looking doubly stupified. There they were, and seemed to have been sitting all the week. I could only reach out a hand to Mrs. Norris. Speaking was impossible in that mute chamber. By this time I hope it is all over with him. In him I have a loss the world cannot make up. He was my friend and my father's friend all the life I can remember. I seem to have made foolish friendships ever since. Those are friendships which outlive a second generation. Old as I am waxing, in his eyes I was still the child he first knew me. To the last he called me Charley. I have none to call me Charley now. He was the last link that bound me to the Temple. You are but of yesterday. In him seem to have died the old plainness of manners and singleness of heart. Letters he knew nothing of, nor did his reading extend beyond the pages of the 'Gentleman's Magazine.' Yet there was a pride of literature about him from being among books (he was librarian), and from some scraps of doubtful Latin which he had picked up in his office of entering students, that gave him very diverting airs of pedantry. Can I forget the erudite look with which, when he had been in vain trying to make out a black-letter text of Chaucer in the Temple Library, he laid it down, and told me that—'in those old books, Charley, there is sometimes a deal of very indifferent spelling;' and seemed to console himself in the reflection! His jokes, for he had his jokes, are now ended; but they were old trusty perennials, staples that pleased after *decies repetita*, and were always as good as new. One song he had, which was reserved for the night of Christmas-day, which we always spent in the Temple. It was an old thing, and spoke of the flat bottoms of our foes, and the possibility of their coming over in darkness, and alluded to threats of an invasion many years blown over; and when he came to the part

> "We'll still make 'em run, and we'll still make 'em sweat,
> In spite of the devil and Brussels Gazette!"

his eyes would sparkle as with the freshness of an impending

event. And what is the Brussels Gazette now? I cry while I enumerate these trifles. 'How shall we tell them in a stranger's ear?'

* * * * * * *

"My first motive in writing, and, indeed, in calling on you, was to ask if you were enough acquainted with any of the benchers to lay a plain statement before them of the circumstances of the family. I almost fear not, for you are of another hall. But if you can oblige me and my poor friend, who is now insensible to any favours, pray exert yourself. You cannot say too much good of poor Norris and his poor wife.

"Yours ever,

"CHARLES LAMB."

In the spring of 1826, the following letters to Bernard Barton were written.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Dear B. B.—I got your book not more than five days ago, so am not so negligent as I must have appeared to you with a fortnight's sin upon my shoulders. I tell you with sincerity, that I think you have completely succeeded in what you intended to do. What is poetry may be disputed—these are poetry to me at least. They are concise, pithy, and moving; uniform as they are, and unembellished. I read them through at two sittings, without one sensation approaching to tedium. I do not know that among your many kind presents of this nature, this is not my favourite volume. The language is never lax, and there is a unity of design and feeling. You wrote them *with love*—to avoid the coxcombical phrase, *con amore*. I am particularly pleased with the 'Spiritual Law,' pages 34 and 35. It reminded me of Quarles, and 'holy Mr. Herbert,' as Izaak Walton calls him; the two best, if not only, of our devotional poets, though some prefer Watts and some Tom Moore. I am far from well or in my right spirits, and shudder at pen-and-ink work. I poke out a monthly crudity for Colburn in his magazine, which I call 'Popular Fallacies,' and periodically crush a proverb or two, setting up my folly against the wisdom of nations. Do you see the 'New Monthly.'

"One word I must object to in your little book, and it recurs more than once—*fadeless* is no genuine compound; loveless is, because love is a noun as well as a verb; but what is a fade? And I do not quite like whipping the Greek drama upon the back of 'Genesis,' page 8. I do not like praise handed in by disparagement; as I objected to a side censure on

Byron, &c., in the 'Lines on Bloomfield.' With these poor cavils excepted, your verses are without a flaw.

"C. LAMB."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Dear B. B.—You may know my letters by the paper and the folding. For the former, I live on scraps obtained in charity from an old friend whose stationary is a permanent perquisite; for folding, I shall do it neatly when I learn to tie my neckcloths. I surprise most of my friends by writing to them on ruled paper, as if I had not got past pothooks and hangers. Sealing-wax, I have none on my establishment; wafers of the coarsest bran supply its place. *When my epistles come to be weighed with Pliny's*, however *superior to the Roman* in delicate irony, judicious reflections, &c., his *gilt post* would bribe over the judges to him. All the time I was at the India House I never mended a pen; I now cut them to the stumps, marring rather than mending the primitive goose-quill. I cannot bear to pay for articles I used to get for nothing. (When Adam laid out his first penny upon nonpareils at some stall in Mesopotamia, I think it went hard with him, reflecting upon his old goodly orchard, where he had so many for nothing.) When I write to a great man at the court end, he opens with surprise upon a naked note, such as Whitechapel people interchange, with no sweet degrees of envelope. I never enclosed one bit of paper in another, nor understood the rationale of it. Once only I sealed with borrowed wax, to set Sir Walter Scott a wondering, impressed with the imperial quartered arms of England, which my friend Field bears in compliment to his descent, in the female line, from Oliver Cromwell. It must have set his antiquarian curiosity upon watering. To your question upon the currency I refer you to Mr. Robinson's last speech, where, if you can find a solution, I cannot. I think this, though, the best ministry we ever stumbled upon; gin reduced four shillings in the gallon, wine two shillings in the quart! This comes home to men's business and bosoms. My tirade against visiters was not meant particularly at you or A. K——. I scarce know what I meant, for I do not just now feel the grievance. I wanted to make an *article*. So in another thing I talked of somebody's *insipid wife*, without a correspondent object in my head: and a good lady, a friend's wife, whom I really *love* (don't startle, I mean in a lawful way), has looked shyly on me ever since. The blunders of personal application are ludicrous. I send out a character now and then on purpose to exercise the ingenuity of my friends. 'Popular Fallacies'

will go on. A little thing without name will also be printed on the Religion of the Actors, but it is out of your way; so I recommend you, with true author's hypocrisy, to skip it. We are about to sit down to roast beef, at which we could wish B. B. and B. B.'s daughter to be humble partakers. So much for my hint at visiters, which was scarcely calculated for droppers-in from Woodbridge; the sky does not drop such larks every day. My very kindest wishes to you all, with my sister's best love.

"C. LAMB."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"May 16, 1826.

"Dear B. B.—I have had no spirits lately to begin a letter to you, though I am under obligations to you (how many?) for your neat little poem. 'Tis just what it professes to be, a simple tribute, in chaste verse, serious and sincere.

"I do not know how Friends will relish it, but we outlyers, honorary friends, like it very well. I have had my head and ears stuffed up with the east winds. A continual ringing in my brain of bells jangled, or the spheres touched by some raw angel. Is it not George the Third tuning the Hundredth Psalm? I get my music for nothing. But the weather seems to be softening, and will thaw my stunnings. Coleridge, writing to me a week or two since, began his note: '*Summer has set in with his usual severity.*' A cold summer is all I know disagreeable in cold. I do not mind the utmost rigour of real winter, but these smiling hypocritical Mays wither me to death. My head has been ringing chaos, like the day the winds were made, before they submitted to the discipline of a weathercock, before the quarters were made. In the street, with the blended noises of life about me, I hear, and my head is lightened; but in a room the hubbub comes back, and I am deaf as a sinner. Did I tell you of a pleasant sketch Hood has done, which he calls '*Very deaf indeed.*' It is of a good-natured stupid-looking old gentleman, whom a footpad has stopped, but, for his extreme deafness, cannot make him understand what he wants. The unconscious old gentleman is extending his ear-trumpet very complacently, and the fellow is firing a pistol into it to make him hear, but the ball will pierce his scull sooner than the report reach his sensorium. I choose a very little bit of paper, for my ear hisses when I bend down to write. I can hardly read a book, for *I miss that small soft voice which the idea of articulated words raises* (almost imperceptibly to you) *in a silent reader. I seem too deaf to see what I read.* But with a touch of returning zephyr my

head will melt. What lies you poets tell about May! It is the most ungenial part of the year. Cold crocuses, cold primroses, you take your blossoms in ice—a painted sun.

Unmeaning joy around appears,
And nature smiles as though she sneers!

"It is ill with me when I begin to look which way the wind blows. Ten years ago, I literally did not know the point from the broad end of your vane, which it was that indicated the quarter. I hope these ill winds have blown *over* you as they do through me.

* * * * * *

"So A. K. keeps a school; she teaches nothing wrong, I'll answer for't. I have a Dutch print of a schoolmistress; surrounded by little oldfashioned Fleminglings, with only one face among them. She a princess of a schoolmistress, wielding a rod for form more than use; the scene, an old monastic chapel, with a Madonna over her head, looking just as serious, as thoughtful, as pure, as gentle as herself. 'Tis a type of thy friend.

"Yours, with kindest wishes,

"C. LAMB."

About this time a little sketch was taken of Lamb, and published. It is certainly not flattering; but there is a touch of Lamb's character in it. He sent one of the prints to Coleridge, with the following note.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Dear Coleridge—If I know myself, nobody more detests the display of personal vanity, which is implied in the act of sitting for one's picture, than myself. But, the fact is, that the likeness which accompanies this letter was stolen from my person at one of my unguarded moments by some too partial artist, and my friends are pleased to think that he has not much flattered me. Whatever its merits may be, you, who have so great an interest in the original, will have a satisfaction in tracing the features of one that has so long esteemed you. There are times when, in a friend's absence, these graphic representations of him almost seem to bring back the man himself. The painter, whoever he was, seems to have taken me in one of those disengaged moments, if I may so term them, when the native character is so much more honestly displayed than can be possible in the restraints of an enforced sitting attitude. Perhaps it rather describes me as a thinking man than a man in the act of thought. Whatever its preten-

sions, I know it will be dear to you, towards whom I should wish my thoughts to flow in a sort of an undress rather than in the more studied graces of diction.

"I am, dear Coleridge, yours sincerely,

"C. LAMB."

In the following summer Lamb and his sister went on a long visit to Enfield, which ultimately led to his giving up Colebrooke cottage, and becoming a constant resident at that place. It was a great sacrifice to him, who loved London so well; but his sister's health and his own required a secession from the crowd of visiters who pressed on him at Islington, and whom he could not help welcoming. He thus invited Mr. Carey, now of the British Museum, to look in upon his retreat.

TO MR. CAREY.

"Dear Sir—It is whispered me that you will not be unwilling to look into our doleful hermitage. Without more preface, you will gladden our cell by accompanying our old chums of the London, Darley and A. C., to Enfield on Wednesday. You shall have hermits' fare, with talk as seraphical as the novelty of the divine life will permit, with an innocent retrospect to the world which we have left, when I will thank you for your hospitable offer at Chiswick, and, with plain hermit reasons, evince the necessity of abiding here.

"Without hearing from you, then, you shall give us leave to expect you. I have long had it on my conscience to invite you, but spirits have been low; and I am indebted to chance for this awkward but most sincere invitation.

"Yours, with best loves to Mrs. Carey,

"C. LAMB.

"D. knows all about the coaches. Oh for a museum in the wilderness!"

The following letter was addressed about this time to Coleridge, who was seriously contemplating a poetical pantomime.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Dear C.—We will, with great pleasure, be with you on Thursday in the next week early. Your finding out my style in your nephew's pleasant book is surprising to me. I want eyes to descry it. You are a little too hard upon his morality, though I confess he has more of Sterne about him than Sternhold. But he saddens into excellent sense before the conclu-

sion. Your query shall be submitted to Miss Kelly, though it is obvious that the pantomime, when done, will be more easy to decide upon than in proposal. I say, do it by all means. I have Decker's play by me, if you can filch anything out of it. Miss G——, with her kitten eyes, is an actress, though she shows it not at all; and pupil to the former, whose gestures she mimics in comedy to the disparagement of her own natural manner, which is agreeable. It is funny to see her bridling up her neck, which is native to F. K.; but there is no setting another's manners upon one's shoulders any more than their head. I am glad you esteem Manning, though you see but his husk or shrine. He discloses not save to select worshippers, and will leave the world without any one hardly but me knowing how stupendous a creature he is. I am perfecting myself in the 'Ode to Eton College' against Thursday, that I may not appear unclassic. I have just discovered that it is much better than the 'Elegy.'

"In haste,

"C. L.

"P.S. I do not know what to say to your *latest* theory about Nero being the Messiah, though by all accounts he was a 'nointed one."

Lamb's desire for dramatic success was not even yet wholly chilled. In this summer he wrote a little piece on the story of Crabbe's tale of the "Confidant," which was never produced, but ultimately published in "Blackwood's Magazine." It runs on agreeably in melodious blank verse, entirely free from the occasional roughnesses of "John Woodvil," but has not sufficient breadth or point for the stage. He alludes to it in the following letter

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Dear B. B.—I have not been able to answer you, for we have had and are having (I just snatch a moment) our poor quiet retreat, to which we fled from society, full of company. Whither can I take wing from the oppression of human faces? Would I were in a wilderness of apes, tossing cocoanuts about, grinning and grinned at!

"M—— was hoaxing you, surely, about my engraving; 'tis a little sixpenny thing, too like by half, in which the draughtsman has done his best to avoid flattery. There have been two editions of it, which, I think, are all gone, as they have vanished from the window where they hung—a printshop corner of Great and Little Queen streets, Lincoln's Inn Fields—where any London friend of yours may inquire for it, for I am

(though you *won't understand it*) at Enfield Chace. We have been here near three months, and shall stay two more, if people will let us alone; but they persecute us from village to village. So, don't direct to Islington again till further notice. I am trying my hand at a drama, in two acts, founded on Crabbe's 'Confidant,' *mutatis mutandis*. You like the Odyssey; did you ever read my 'Adventures of Ulysses,' founded on Chapman's old translation of it? for children or men. Chapman is divine, and my abridgment has not quite emptied him of his divinity. When you come to town I will show it you. You have well described your old fashionable grand paternal hall. Is it not odd that every one's earliest recollections are of some such place? I had my Blakesware (Blakesmoor in the 'London'). Nothing fills a child's mind like a large old mansion: better if un—or partially—occupied, peopled with the spirits of deceased members for the county, and justices of the quorum. Would I were buried in the peopled solitude of one, with my feelings at seven years old! Those marble busts of the emperors, they seemed as if they were to stand for ever, as they had stood from the living ages of Rome, in that old marble hall, and I to partake of their permanency. Eternity was while I thought not of time. But he thought of me, and they are toppled down, and corn covers the spot of the noble old dwelling and its princely gardens. I feel like a grasshopper that, chirping about the grounds, escapes his scythe only by my littleness. Even now he is whetting one of his smallest razors to clean wipe me out, perhaps. Well!"

The following is an acknowledgment of some verses which Lamb had begged for Miss Isola's album.

"Dear B. B.—I am thankful to you for your ready compliance with my wishes. Emma is delighted with your verses; and I have sent them, with four album poems of my own, to a Mr. F——, who is to be the editor of a more superb pocket-book than has yet appeared, by far! the property of some wealthy booksellers; but whom, or what its name, I forgot to ask. It is actually to have in it schoolboy exercises by his present majesty and the late Duke of York. Wordsworth is named as a contributor. F——, whom I have slightly seen, is editor of a forthcome or coming review of foreign books, and is intimately connected with Lockhart and ——. So I take it that this is a concern of Murray's. Walter Scott also contributes mainly. I have stood off a long time from these annuals, which are ostentatious trumpery, but could not withstand the request of Jameson, a particular friend of mine and Coleridge's.

"I shall hate myself in frippery, strutting along, and

'Vying in finery with beaux and belles,
Future Lord Byrons and sweet L. E. L.'s.'

Your taste, I see, is less simple than mine, which the differ ence in our persuasions has doubtless effected. In fact, of late you have so Frenchified your style, larding it with *hors de combat* and *au desespoirs*, that, o' my conscience, the Foxian blood is quite dried out of you, and the skipping monsieur spirit has been infused.

"If you have anything you like to send further, I dare say an honourable place would be given to it; but I have not heard from F—— since I sent mine, nor shall I probably again, and therefore I do not solicit it as from him. Yesterday I sent off my tragi-comedy to Mr. Kemble; wish it luck. I made it all ('tis blank verse, and, I think, of the true old dramatic cut), or most of it, in the green lanes about Enfield, where I am, and mean to remain, in spite of your peremptory doubts on that head. Your refusal to lend your poetical sanction to my 'Icon,' and your reasons to Evans are most sensible. Maybe I may hit on a line or two of my own jocular, maybe not. Do you never Londonize again? I should like to talk over old poetry with you, of which I have much, and you, I think, little. I would willingly come and work for you three weeks or so to let you loose. Would I could sell or give you some of my leisure! POSITIVELY, THE BEST THING A MAN CAN HAVE TO DO IS NOTHING! and, *next to that*, perhaps, GOOD WORKS! I am but poorlyish, and feel myself writing a dull letter; poorlyish from company; not generally, for I never was better, nor took more walks, fourteen miles a day on an average, with a sporting dog, Dash. You would not know the plain poet any more than he doth recognise James Naylor tricked out *au désespoy* (how do you spell it?).

"C. LAMB."

The following was written to the friend to whom Lamb had intrusted Dash a few days after the parting.

TO MR. PATMORE.

"Mrs. Leishman's, Chace, Enfield.

"Dear P.—Excuse my anxiety, but how is Dash? I should have asked if Mrs. P——e kept her rules, and was improving; but Dash came uppermost. The order of our thoughts should be the order of our writing. Goes he muzzled, or *aperto ore*? Are his intellects sound, or does he wander a little in *his* conversation? You cannot be too careful to watch the first symptoms of incoherence. The first illogical snarl he makes, to

St. Luke's with him. All the dogs here are going mad if you believe the overseers; but, I protest, they seem to me very rational and collected. But nothing is so deceitful as mad people to those who are not used to them. Try him with hot water: if he won't lick it up, it is a sign—he does not like it. Does his tail wag horizontally or perpendicularly? That has decided the fate of many dogs in Enfield. Is his general deportment cheerful? I mean when he is pleased—for otherwise there is no judging. You can't be too careful. Has he bit any of the children yet? If he has, have them shot, and keep *him* for curiosity, to see if it was the hydrophobia. They say all our army in India had it at one time; but that was in *Hyder*-Ally's time. Do you get paunch for him? Take care the sheep was sane. You might pull out his teeth (if he would let you), and then you need not mind if he were as mad as a bedlamite. It would be rather fun to see his odd ways. It might amuse Mrs. P—— and the children. They'd have more sense than he. He'd be like a fool kept in a family, to keep the household in good-humour with their own understanding. You might teach him the mad dance, set to the mad howl. *Mad*ge *Owl*et would be nothing to him. 'My! how he capers!' [In the margin is written, 'One of the children speaks this.'*] * * * * *

What I scratch out is a German quotation from Lessing, on the bite of rabid animals; but I remember you don't read German. But Mrs. P—— may, so I wish I had let it stand. The meaning in English is—'Avoid to approach an animal suspected of madness, as you would avoid fire or a precipice,' which, I think, is a sensible observation. The Germans are certainly profounder than we. If the slightest suspicion arises in your breast that all is not right with him, muzzle him and lead him in a string (common packthread will do—he don't care for twist) to Mr. Hood's, his quondam master, and he'll take him in at any time. You may mention your suspicion, or not, as you like, or as you think it may wound or not Mr. H.'s feelings. Hood, I know, will wink at a few follies in Dash, in consideration of his former sense. Besides, Hood is deaf, and, if you hinted anything, ten to one he would not hear you. Besides, you will have discharged your conscience, and laid the child at the right door, as they say.

"We are dawdling our time away very idly and pleasantly at a Mrs. Leishman's, Chace, Enfield, where, if you come a hunting, we can give you cold meat and a tankard. Her husband is a tailor; but that, you know, does not make her

* Here three lines are carefully erased

one. I knew a jailer (which rhymes), but his wife was a fine lady.

"Let us hear from you respecting Mrs. P——'s regimen. I send my love in a —— to Dash.

"C. LAMB."

On the *outside* of the letter is written:—

"Seriously, I wish you would call upon Hood when you are that way. He's a capital fellow. I've sent him two poems, one ordered by his wife, and written to order; and 'tis a week since, and I've not heard from him. I fear something is the matter.

"Omitted within:

"Our kindest remembrance to Mrs. P."

He thus, in December, expresses his misery in a letter

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"My dear B. B.—I have scarce spirits to write, yet am harassed with not writing. Enfield and everything is very gloomy. I feel most thankful for the spinsterly attentions of your sister. Thank that kind 'knitter in the sun!' What nonsense seems verse when one is seriously out of hope and spirits! I mean, that at this time I have some nonsense to write, under pain of incivility. Would to the fifth heaven a coxcombress had ever invented albums!

"I have not received the annual, nor the slightest notice from —— about omitting four or five of my things. The best thing is never to hear of such a thing as a bookseller again, or to think there are publishers. Second-hand stationers and old bookstalls for me; authorship should be an idea of the past. Old kings, old bishops are venerable; all present is hollow. I cannot make a letter. I have no straw, not a pennyworth of chaff, only this may stop your kind importunity to know about us. There is a comfortable house, but no tenants. *One* does not make a *household*. Do not think I am quite in despair; but, in addition to hope protracted, I have a stupifying cold and obstructing headache, and the sun is dead!

"I will not fail to apprize you of the revival of a beam. Meantime accept this, rather than think I have forgotten you at all" * * * * * *

A proposal to erect a memorial to Clarkson, upon the spot by the wayside where he stopped when on a journey from

Cambridge to London, and formed the great resolution of devoting his life to the abolition of the slave trade, produced from Lamb the following letter to the lady who had announced it to him:—

"Dear Madam—I return your list with my name. I should be sorry that any respect should be going on towards Clarkson, and I be left out of the conspiracy. Otherwise, I frankly own that to pillarize a man's good feelings in his lifetime is not to my taste. Monuments to goodness, even after death, are equivocal. I turn away from Howard's, I scarce know why. Goodness blows no trumpet, nor desires to have it blown. *We should be modest for a modest man*—as he is for himself. The vanities of life—art, poetry, skill military—are subjects for trophies; not the silent thoughts arising in a good man's mind in lonely places. Was I Clarkson, I should never be able to walk or ride near the spot again. Instead of bread, we are giving him a stone. Instead of the locality recalling the noblest moment of his existence, it is a place at which his friends (that is, himself) blow to the world, 'What a good man is he!' I sat down upon a hillock at Forty Hill yesternight—a fine contemplative evening—with a thousand good speculations about mankind. How I yearned with cheap benevolence! I shall go and inquire of the stonecutter that cuts the tombstones here what a stone with a short inscription will cost, just to say, 'Here C. Lamb loved his brethren of mankind.' Everybody will come there to love. As I can't well put my own name, I shall put about a subscription:

Mrs. ——	£0	5	0	
Procter,	0	2	6	
G. Dyer,	0	1	0	
Mr. Godwin,	0	0	0	
Mrs. Godwin,	0	0	0	
Mr. Irving,				a watch chain,
Mr. ——				the proceeds of —— first edition.
	£0	8	6	

"I scribble in haste from here, where we shall be some time. Pray request Mr. —— to advance the guinea for me, which shall faithfully be forthcoming; and pardon me that I don't see the proposal in quite the light that he may. The kindness of his motives, and his power of appreciating the passage, I thoroughly agree in.

"With most kind regards to him, I conclude,

"Dear madam, yours truly,

"C. LAMB

"From Mrs. Leishman's, Chace, Enfield."

The following appears to have been written in October, 1828.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"A splendid edition of 'Bunyan's Pilgrim!' Why the thought is enough to turn one's moral stomach. His cockle-hat and staff transformed to a smart cocked beaver and a jemmy cane; his amice gray to the last Regent-street cut; and his painful palmer's pace to the modern swagger. Stop thy friend's sacrilegious hand. Nothing can be done for B. but to reprint the old cuts in as homely but good a style as possible. The Vanity Fair and the Pilgrims there—the Silly-soothness in his setting-out countenance—the Christian Idiocy (in a good sense) of his admiration of the shepherds on the Delectable Mountains; the lions, so truly allegorical and remote from any similitude to Pidcock's; the great head (the author's), capacious of dreams and similitudes, dreaming in the dungeon. Perhaps you don't know my edition, what I had when a child. If you do, can you bear new designs from Martin, enamelled into copper or silver-plate by Heath, accompanied with verses from Mrs. Hemans's pen. Oh how unlike his own!

> Wouldst thou divert thyself from melancholy?
> Wouldst thou be pleasant, yet be far from folly?
> Wouldst thou read riddles, and their explanation,
> Or else be drown'd in thy contemplation?
> Dost thou love picking meat? or wouldst thou see
> A man i' the clouds, and hear him speak to thee?
> Wouldst thou be in a dream, and yet not sleep?
> Or wouldst thou in a moment laugh and weep?
> Or wouldst thou lose thyself, and catch no harm,
> And find thyself again without a charm?
> Wouldst read *thyself*, and read thou knowst not what,
> And yet know whether thou art bless'd or not
> By reading the same lines? Oh then come hither,
> And lay my book, thy head, and heart together.
>
> JOHN BUNYAN

Show me such poetry in any one of the fifteen forthcoming combinations of show and emptiness yclept 'Annuals.' So there's verses for thy verses; and now let me tell you, that the sight of your hand gladdened me. I have been daily trying to write to you, but paralyzed. You have spurred me on to this iny effort, and at intervals I hope to hear from and talk to you. But my spirits have been in an oppressed way for a long time, and they are things which must be to you of faith for who can explain depression! Yes, I am hooked into the 'Gem,' but only for some lines written on a dead infant of the editor's, which being, as it were, his property, I could not refuse their appearing; but I hate the paper, the type, the gloss

the dandy plates, the names of contributors poked up into your eyes in the first page, and whisked through all the covers of magazines, the barefaced sort of emulation, the immodest candidateship, brought into so little space. In those old 'Londons,' a signature was lost in the wood of matter, the paper coarse (till latterly, which spoiled them); in short, I detest to appear in an annual. What a fertile genius (and a quiet good soul withal) is Hood. He has fifty things in hand; farces to supply the Adelphi for the season; a comedy for one of the great theatres just ready; a whole entertainment, by himself, for Matthews and Yates to figure in; a meditated Comic Annual for next year, to be nearly done by himself. You'd like him very much.

"Wordsworth, I see, has a good many pieces announced in one of the Annuals, not our Gem. W. Scott has distributed himself like a bribe haunch among 'em. Of all the poets, Carey has had the good sense to keep quite clear of 'em, with gentle, manly, right notions. Don't think I set up for being proud on this point; I like a bit of flattery, tickling my vanity, as well as any one. But these pompous masquerades without masks (naked names or faces) I hate. So there's a bit of my mind. Besides, they infallibly cheat you, I mean the booksellers. If I get but a copy, I only expect it from Hood's being my friend. Coleridge has lately been here. He too is deep among the prophets, the year servers—the mob of gentlemen annuals. But they'll cheat him, I know. And now, dear B. B., the sun shining out merrily, and the dirty clouds we had yesterday having washed their own faces clean with their own rain, tempts me to wander up Winchmore Hill, or into some of the delightful vicinages of Enfield, which I hope to show you at some time when you can get a few days up to the great town. Believe me it would give both of us great pleasure to show you our pleasant farms and villages.

"We both join in kindest love to you and yours.

"C. LAMB, *redivivus*."

The following is of December, and closes the letters which remain of this year.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Dec., 1828.

"Dear B. B.—I am ashamed to receive so many nice books from you, and to have none to send you in return. You are always sending me some fruits or wholesome potherbs, and mine is the garden of the Sluggard, nothing but weeds, or

scarce they. Nevertheless, if I knew how to transmit it, I would send you Blackwood's of this month, which contains a little drama, to have your opinion of it, and how far I have improved, or otherwise, upon its prototype. Thank you for your kind sonnet. It does me good to see the Dedication to a Christian Bishop. I am for a comprehension, as divines call it; but so as that the Church shall go a good deal more than half way over to the silent meeting-house. I have ever said that the Quakers are the only *professors* of Christianity, as I read it in the Evangiles; I say *professors*—marry, as to practice, with their gaudy hot types and poetical vanities, they are much as one with the sinful. Martin's frontispiece is a very fine thing, let *C. L.* say what he please to the contrary. Of the poems, I like them, as a volume, better than any of the preceding; particularly 'Power and Gentleness'—'The Present'—'Lady Russell;' with the exception that I do not like the noble act of Curtius, true or false—one of the grand foundations of the old Roman patriotism—to be sacrificed to Lady R.'s taking notes on her husband's trial. If a thing is good, why invidiously bring it into comparison with something better? There are too few heroic things in this world to admit of our marshalling them in anxious etiquettes of precedence. Would you make a poem on the story of Ruth (pretty story!) and then say—Ay, but how much better is the story of 'Joseph and his brethren!' To go on, the stanzas to 'Chalon' wants the *name* of Clarkson in the body of them; it is left to inference. The 'Battle of Gibeon' is spirited, again. 'Godiva' is delicately touched. I have always thought it a beautiful story, characteristic of the old English times. But I could not help amusing myself with the thought—if Martin had chosen this subject for a frontispiece—there would have been in some dark corner a white lady, white as the walker on the waves, riding upon some mystical quadruped; and high above would have risen tower above tower—'a massy structure high'—the Tenterden steeples of Coventry, till the poor cross would scarce have known itself among the clouds; and, far above them all, the distant Clint hills peering over chimney-pots, piled up, Olympus fashion, till the admiring spectator (admirer of a noble deed) might have gone look for the lady, as you must hunt for the other in the lobster. But M—— should be made royal architect. What palaces he would pile! But, then, what parliamentary grants to make them good! Nevertheless, I like the frontispiece. The 'Elephant' is pleasant, and I am glad you are getting into a wider scope of subjects. There may be too much, not religion, but too many *good words* in a book, till t

becomes a rhapsody of words. I will just name that you have brought in the 'Song to the Shepherds' in four or five, if not six places. Now this is not good economy. The 'Enoch' is fine; and here I can sacrifice 'Elijah' to it, because 'tis illustrative only, and not disparaging of the latter prophet's departure. I like this best in the book. Lastly, I much like the 'Heron;' 'tis exquisite. Know you Lord Thurlow's Sonnet to a bird of that sort on Lacken water? If not, 'tis indispensable that I send it you, with my Blackwood. 'Fludyer' is pleasant—you are getting gay and Hood-ish. What is the enigma? Money? If not, I fairly confess I am foiled, and sphynx must . . . . . *eat me*. Four times I have tried to write—eat me, and the blotting pen turns it into —cat me. And now I will take my leave with saying I esteem thy verses, like thy present, honour thy frontispiece, and right reverence thy patron and dedication, and am, dear B. B.,

"Yours heartily,
"C. LAMB"

CHAPTER XVII.

[1829, 1830.]

Letters to Robinson, Procter, Barton, Wilson, Gilman, Wordsworth, and Dyer.

HAVING decided on residing entirely at Enfield, Lamb gave up Colebrooke cottage, and took what he described in a note-let to me as "an odd-looking gambogish-coloured house," at Chace-side, Enfield. The situation was far from picturesque, for the opposite side of the road only presented some middling tenements, two dissenting chapels, and a public house decorated with a swinging sign of a Rising Sun; but the neighbouring field walks were pleasant, and the country, as he liked to say, quite as good as Westmoreland.

He continued occasional contributions to the New Monthly, especially the series of "Popular Fallacies;" wrote short articles in the Athenæum; and a great many acrostics on the names of his friends. He had now a neighbour in Mr. Sergeant Wilde, to whom he was introduced by Mr. Burney, and whom he held in high esteem, though Lamb cared nothing for forensic eloquence, and thought very little of eloquence of any

kind, which, it must be confessed, when printed, is the n vapid of all reading. What political interest could not exc personal regard produced in favour of his new friend; Lamb supplied several versified squibs and snatches of e tioneering songs to grace Wilde's contests at Newark. W these slender avocations his life was dull, and only a se of duty induced him to persist in absence from London.

The following letter was written in acknowledgment c parcel sent to Miss Lamb, comprising (what she had expres a wish to have) a copper coal-scoop and a pair of elastic sp tacles, accompanied by a copy of "Pamela," which, hav been borrowed and supposed to be lost, had been replaced another in Lamb's library.

TO MR. H. C. ROBINSON.

"Dear R.—Expectation was alert on the receipt of y strange-shaped present, while yet undisclosed from its f envelope. Some said 'tis a *viol da Gamba;* others p nounced it a fiddle; I myself hoped it a liqueur case, pr nant with *eau-de-vie* and such old nectar. When midw into daylight, the gossips were at a loss to pronounce upon species. Most took it for a marrow-spoon, an apple-scoo banker's guinea-shovel; at length its true scope appeared; drift, to save the back-bone of my sister stooping to scutt A philanthropic intent, borrowed, no doubt, from some of colliers. You save people's backs one way, and break again by loads of obligation. The spectacles are delicate Vulcanian. No lighter texture than their steel did the cu oldy blacksmith frame to catch Mrs. Vulcan and the capt in. For ungalled forehead, as for back unbursten, you h Mary's thanks. Marry, for my own peculium of obligati 'twas supererogatory. A second part of Pamela was enou in conscience. Two Pamelas in a house is too much, with two Mr. B.'s to reward 'em.

"Mary, who is handselling her new aerial perspecti upon a pair of old worsted stockings trod out in Chesh lanes, sends her love. I, great good-liking. Bid us a p sonal farewell before you see the Vatican.

"CHARLES LAMI

"Enfield, Feb. 27, 1829."

The following letter to his friend, who so prosperou combines conveyancing with poetry, is a fair sample of Lan elaborate and good-natured fictions. It is hardly necessar say that the reference to a coolness between him and two his legal friends is part of the fiction.

TO MR. PROCTER.

"My dear Procter—I am ashamed not to have taken the drift of your pleasant letter, which I find to have been pure invention. But jokes are not suspected in Bœotian Enfield. We are plain people, and our talk is of corn, and cattle, and Waltham markets. Besides, I was a little out of sorts when I received it. The fact is, I am involved in a case which has fretted me to death, and I have no reliance except on you to extricate me. I am sure you will give me your best legal advice, having no professional friend besides, but Robinson and Talfourd, with neither of whom, at present, I am on the best of terms. My brother's widow left a will, made during the lifetime of my brother, in which I am named sole executor, by which she bequeaths forty acres of arable property, which it seems she held under covert baron, unknown to my brother, to the heirs of the body of Elizabeth Dowden, her married daughter by a first husband, in fee simple, recoverable by fine; invested property, mind, for there is the difficulty; subjected to leet and quit rent; in short, worded in the most guarded terms, to shut out the property from Isaac Dowden, the husband. Intelligence has just come of the death of this person in India, where he made a will, entailing this property (which seemed entangled enough already) to the heirs of his body, that should not be born of his wife; for it seems, by the law in India, natural children can recover. They have put the cause into exchequer process here, removed by *certiorari* from the native courts; and the question is, whether I should, as executor, try the cause here, or again re-remove it to the Supreme Sessions at Bangalore, which I understand I can, or plead a hearing before the privy council here. As it involves all the little property of Elizabeth Dowden, I am anxious to take the fittest steps, and what may be least expensive. For God's sake assist me, for the case is so embarrassed that it deprives me of sleep and appetite. M. Burney thinks there is a case like it in chap. 170, sec. 5, in 'Fearn's Contingent Remainders.' Pray read it over with him dispassionately, and let me have the result. The complexity lies in the questionable power of the husband to alienate in usum; enfeoffments whereof he was only collaterally seised, &c.

"I had another favour to beg, which is the beggarliest of beggings. A few lines of verse for a young friend's album (six will be enough). M. Burney will tell you who she is I want 'em for. A girl of gold. Six lines—make 'em eight—signed Barry C——. They need not be very good, as I chiefly want 'em as a foil to mine. But I shall be seriously

obliged by any refuse scrap. We are in the last ages of the world, when St. Paul prophesied that women should be 'headstrong, lovers of their own wills, having albums.' I fled hither to escape the albumean persecution; and had not been in my new house twenty-four hours, when the daughter of the next house came in with a friend's album to beg a contribution, and the following day intimated she had one of her own. Two more have sprung up since. If I take the wings of the morning and fly unto the uttermost parts of the earth, there will albums be. New Holland has albums. But the age is to be complied with. M. B. will tell you the sort of girl I request the ten lines for. Somewhat of a pensive cast, what you admire. The lines may come before the law question, as that cannot be determined before Hilary Term, and I wish your deliberate judgment on that. The other may be flimsy and superficial. And if you have not burnt your returned letter, pray resend it me, as a monumental token of my stupidity."

* * * * * *

Lamb was as unfortunate in his communications with the annuals as unhappy in the importunities of the fair owners of albums. His favourite pieces were omitted; and a piece not his, called "The Widow," was, by a license of friendship, which Lamb forgave, inserted in one of them. He thus complains of these grievances in a letter which he wrote on the marriage of the daughter of a friend to a great theoretical chymist.

TO MR. PROCTER.

"Rumour tells us that Miss —— is married. Who is ——? I hear he is a great chymist. I am sometimes chymical myself. A thought strikes me with horror. Pray Heaven he may not have done it for the sake of trying chymical experiments upon her—young female subjects are so scarce. An't you glad about Burke's case? We may set off the Scotch murders against the Scotch novels. Hare, the Great Un hanged.

"M. B. is richly worth your knowing. He is on the top scale of my friendship ladder, on which an angel or two is still climbing, and some, alas! descending. Did you see a sonnet of mine in Blackwood's last? Curious construction! Elaborata facilitas! And now I'll tell. 'Twas written for 'The Gem,' but the editors declined it on the plea that it would *shock all mothers;* so they published 'The Widow' instead. I am born out of time. I have no conjecture about what the present world calls delicacy. I thought 'Rosamund

Gray' was a pretty modest thing. Hessey assures me that the world would not bear it. I have lived to grow into an indecent character. When my sonnet was rejected, I exclaimed, 'Hang the age, I will write for antiquity!'

"*Erratum* in sonnet. Last line but something, for tender, read tend. The Scotch do not know our law terms; but I find some remains of honest, plain old writing lurking there still. They were not so mealy-mouth'd as to refuse my verses. Maybe 'tis their oatmeal.

"Blackwood sent me —*l.* for the drama. Somebody cheated me out of it next day; and my new pair of breeches, just sent home, cracking at first putting on, I exclaimed, 'All tailors are cheats, and all men are tailors.' Then I was better."

The next contains Lamb's thanks for the verses he had begged for Miss Isola's album. They comprehended a compliment turning on the words Isola Bella.

TO MR. PROCTER.

"The comings in of an incipient conveyancer are not adequate to the receipt of three twopenny post non-paids in a week. Therefore, after this, I condemn my pen to long and deep silence, or shall awaken it to write to lords. Lest those raptures in this honeymoon of my correspondence you avow for the visitations of my Nuncio, after passing through certain natural grades, as Love, Love and Water, Love with the chill off, then subsiding to that point which the heroic suiter of his wedded dame, the noble-spirited Lord Randolph in the play, declares to be the ambition of his passion, a reciprocation of 'complacent kindness,' it suddenly plump down (scarce staying to bait at the mid point of indifference, so hungry it is for distaste) to a loathing and blank aversion, to the rendering probable such counter expressions as this, 'Hang that infernal twopenny postman (words which make the messenger 'lift up his hands and wonder who can use them'). While, then, you are not ruined, let me assure thee, oh thou above the painter, and next only under Giraldus Cambrensis, the most immortal and worthy to be immortal Barry, thy most ingenious and golden cadences do take my fancy mightily. But tell me, and tell me truly, gentle swain, is that Isola Bella a true spot in geographical denomination, or a floating Delos in thy brain. Lurks that fair island in verity in the bosom of Lake Maggiore, or some other with less poetic name, which thou hast Cornwallized for the occasion. And what if Maggiore itself be but a coinage of adaptation? Of this, pray re-

solve me immediately, for my albumess will be catechised this subject; and how can I prompt her? Lake Lema know, and Lemon Lake (in a punch bowl) I have swum though those lymphs be long since dry. But Maggiore i be in the moon. Unsphynx this riddle for me, for my shel have no gazetteer."

The following letters contain a noble instance of Lar fine consideration and exquisite feeling in morality.

TO MR. PROCTER.

"When Miss —— was at Enfield, which she was in s mer-time, and owed her health to its sun and genial ir ences, she visited (with young ladylike impertinence) a l man's cottage that had a pretty baby (oh the yearnling!), g it fine caps and sweetmeats. On a day broke into the lour our two maids uproarious, 'Oh, ma'am, who do you th Miss —— has been working a cap for?' 'A child,' answe Mary, in true Shandean female simplicity. 'It's the m child as was taken up for sheep-stealing.' Miss —— staggered, and would have cut the connexion, but by n force I made her go and take her leave of her protégée. thought, if she went no more, the Abactor or Abactor's v (vide Ainsworth) would suppose she had heard somethi and I have delicacy for a sheep-stealer. The overseers tually overhauled a mutton-pie at the baker's (his first, l and only hope of mutton-pie), which he never came to and thence inferred his guilt. Per occasionem cujus, I frai the sonnet; observe its elaborate construction. I was i days about it.

'THE GIPSY'S MALISON.

"Suck, baby, suck! mother's love grows by giving,
Drain the sweet founts that only thrive by wasting;
Black manhood comes, when riotous guilty living
Hands thee the cup that shall be death in tasting.
Kiss, baby, kiss! mother's lips shine by kisses,
Choke the warm breath that else would fall in blessings;
Black manhood comes, when turbulent guilty blisses
Tend thee the kiss that poisons mid caressings.
Hang, baby, hang! mother's love loves such forces,
Strain the fond neck that bends still to thy clinging;
Black manhood comes, when violent lawless courses
Leave thee a spectacle in rude air swinging."
So sang a wither'd beldam energetical,
And bann'd the ungiving door with lips prophetical.'

"Barry, study that sonnet. It is curiously and pervers elaborate. 'Tis a choking subject, and therefore the res is directed to the structure of it. See you? and was thi

fourteener to be rejected by a trumpery annual? forsooth, 'twould shock all mothers; and may all mothers, who would so be shocked, be hanged! as if mothers were such sort of logicians as to infer the future hanging of *their* child from the theoretical hangibility (or capacity of being hanged, if the judge pleases) of every infant born with a neck on. Oh B. C., my whole heart is faint, and my whole head is sick (how is it?) at this cursed, canting, unmasculine age!"

* * * * * *

There is a little Latin letter about the same time to the same friend.

TO MR. PROCTER.

"Facundissime Poeta! quanquam istiusmodi epitheta oratoribus potiùs quam poetis attinere facilè scio—tamen, facundissime!

"Commoratur nobiscum jamdiu, in agro Enfeldiense, scilicet, leguleius futurus, illustrissimus Martinus Burneius, otium agens, negotia nominalia, et officinam clientum vacuam, paululum fugiens. Orat, implorat te—nempe, Martinus—ut si (quòd Dii faciant) fortè fortunâ, absente ipso, advenerit tardus cliens, eum certiorem feceris per literas hûc missas. Intelligisne? an me Anglicè et barbaricè ad te hominem perdoctum scribere oportet? C. AGNUS.

"Si status de franco tenemento datur avo, et in eodem facto si mediate vel immediate datur *hæredibus vel hæredibus corporis dicti avi*, postrema hæc verba sunt Limitationis non Perquisitionis.

"Dixi. CARLAGNULUS."

An allusion to Rogers, worthy of both, occurs in a letter

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"June 3, 1829.

"Dear B. B.—To get out of home themes, have you seen Southey's 'Dialogues?' His lake descriptions, and the account of his library at Keswick, are very fine. But he needed not have called up the ghost of More to hold the conversations with, which might as well have passed between A. and B., or Caius and Lucius. It is making too free with a defunct chancellor and martyr.

"I feel as if I had nothing further to write about. Oh! I forgot; the prettiest letter I ever read, that I have received from 'Pleasures of Memory' Rogers, in acknowledgment of a sonnet I sent him on the loss of his brother.

"It is too long to transcribe, but I hope to show it you s day, as I hope some time again to see you when all of u well. Only it ends thus, 'We were nearly of an age (he the elder); he was the only person in the world in whose I always appeared young.'"

* * * * * *

What a lesson does the following read to us from one while condemned to uninteresting industry, thought happi consisted in an affluence of time!

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Enfield Chace-side, Saturday, 25th Ju A. D. 1829, 11 A. M.

"There—a fuller, plumper, juicier date never dropped Idumean palm. Am I in the date-ive case now? if not, for dates, which is more than a date is worth. I never much affected to those limitary specialities. Least of all, the date of my superannuation.

What have I with time to do?
Slaves of desks, 'twas meant for you.

But town, with all my native hankering after it, is not wl was. The streets, the shops are left, but all old friend gone. And in London I was frightfully convinced of th I passed houses and places, empty caskets now. I ceased to care almost about anybody. The bodies I c for are in graves or dispersed. My old chums, that live long and flourished so steadily, are crumbled away. V I took leave of our adopted young friend at Charing C 'twas a heavy unfeeling rain, and I had nowhere to go. E have I none, and not a sympathizing house to turn to in great city. Never did the waters of heaven pour down forlorner head. Yet I tried ten days at a sort of friend's h but it was large and straggling—one of the individuals o old long knot of friends, card-players, pleasant compan that have tumbled to pieces, into dust and other things; s got home on Thursday, convinced that it was better to home to my hole at Enfield, and hide like a sick cat i corner. And to make me more alone, our ill-tempered is gone, who, with all her airs, was yet a home-piece of niture, a record of better days; and the young thing tha succeeded her is good and attentive, but she is nothing. I have no one here to talk over old matters with. *Sco* and *quarrelling* have *something* of *familiarity* and a *comm* of *interest*; they imply acquaintance; *they are of one senti which is of the family of dearness.*

"I can neither scold at nor quarrel at this insignifican

plement of household services; she is less than a cat, and just better than a deal dresser. What I can do, and over-do, is to walk; but deadly long are the days, these summer all-day-days, with but a half hour's candlelight, and no firelight. I do not write, tell your kind inquisitive Eliza, and can hardly read. 'Tis cold work, authorship, without something to puff one into fashion. Could you not write something on Quakerism for Quakers to read, but nominally addressed to Non-Quakers, explaining your dogmas, as waiting on the Spirit, by the analogy of human calmness, and waiting on the judgment? I scarcely know what I mean, but to make Non-Quakers reconciled to your doctrines, by showing something like them in mere human operations; but I hardly understand myself, so let it pass for nothing. I assure you, *no work* is worse than *over work*. The mind preys on itself, the most unwholesome food. I bragged formerly that I could not have too much time. I have a surfeit; with few years to come, the days are wearisome. But weariness is not eternal. Something will shine out to take the load off that crushes me, which is at present intolerable. I have killed an hour or two in this poor scrawl. I am a sanguinary murderer of time, and would kill him inchmeal just now. But the snake is vital. Well, I shall write merrier anon. 'Tis the present copy of my countenance I send, and to complain is a little to alleviate. May you enjoy yourself as far as the wicked world will let you, and think that you are not quite alone, as I am! Health to Lucia, and to Anna, and kind remembrances.

"Your forlorn

"C. L."

The cares of housekeeping pressed too heavily on Miss Lamb, and her brother resolved to resign the dignity of a housekeeper for the independence of a lodger. A couple of old dwellers in Enfield, hard by his cottage, had the good fortune to receive them. Lamb refers to the change in the following letter, acknowledging the receipt of Wilson's 'Life of De Foe,' in which a criticism from his pen was inserted, imbodying the sentiments which he had expressed some years before.

TO MR. WALTER WILSON.

"Enfield, 15th November, 1809.

"My dear Wilson—I have not opened a packet of unknown contents for many years that gave me so much pleasure as when I disclosed your three volumes. I have given them a careful perusal, and they have taken their degree of classical

books upon my shelves. De Foe was always my darling, but what darkness was I in as to far the larger part of his writings! I have now an epitome of them all. I think the way in which you have done the 'Life' the most judicious you could have pitched upon. You have made him tell his own story, and your comments are in keeping with the tale. Why, I never heard of such a work as 'the Review.' Strange that, in my stall-hunting days, I never so much as lit upon an odd volume of it. This circumstance looks as if they were never of any great circulation. But I may have met with 'em, and, not knowing the prize, overpassed 'em. I was almost a stranger to the whole history of Dissenters in those reigns, and picked my way through that strange book, the 'Consolidator,' at random. How affecting are some of his personal appeals: what a machine of projects he set on foot, and following writers have picked his pocket of the patents! I do not understand whereabouts in Roxana he himself left off. I always thought the complete-tourist-sort of description of the town she passes through on her last embarcation miserably unseasonable and out of place. I knew not they were spurious. Enlighten me as to where the apocryphal matter commences. I, by accident, can correct one A. D., 'Family Instructor,' vol. ii., 1718; you say his first volume had then reached the fourth edition; now I have a fifth, printed for Eman Matthews, 1717. So have I plucked one rotten date, or rather picked it up where it had inadvertently fallen, from your flourishing date-tree, the Palm of Engaddi. I may take it for my pains. I think yours a book which every public library must have, and every English scholar should have. I am sure it has enriched my meager stock of the author's works. I seem to be twice as opulent. Mary is by my side, just finishing the second volume. It must have interest to divert her away so long from her modern novels. Coleridge will be quite jealous. I was a little disappointed at my 'Ode to the Treadmill' not finding a place, but it came out of time. The two papers of mine will puzzle the reader, being so akin. Odd, that, never keeping a scrap of my own letters, with some fifteen years' interval, I should nearly have said the same things. But I shall always feel happy in having my name go down any how with De Foe's, and that of his historiographer. I promise myself, if not immortality, yet diuternity of being read in consequence. We have both had much illness this year, and feeling infirmities and fretfulness grow upon us: we have cast off the cares of housekeeping, sold off our goods, and commenced boarding and lodging with a very comfortable old couple next door to where you found us. We use a sort

of common table. Nevertheless, we have reserved a private one for an old friend; and when Mrs. Wilson and you revisit Babylon, we shall pray you to make it yours for a season. Our very kindest remembrances to you both.

"From your old friend and *fellow-journalist*, now in *two instances*,

"C. LAMB.

"Hazlitt is going to make your book a basis for a review of De Foe's Novels in 'the Edinbro'.' I wish I had health and spirits to do it. Hone I have not seen, but I doubt not he will be much pleased with your performance. I very much hope you will give us an account of Dunton, &c. But what I should more like to see would be a life and times of Bunyan. Wishing health to you, and long life to your healthy book, again I subscribe me,

"Yours in verity,
"C. L."

About the same time the following letter was written, alluding to the same change.

TO MR. GILMAN.

"Dear Gilman—Allsop brought me your kind message yesterday. How can I account for not having visited Highgate this long time? Change of place seemed to have changed me. How grieved I was to hear in what indifferent health Coleridge has been, and I not to know of it! A little school divinity, well applied, may be healing. I send him honest Tom of Aquin; that was always an obscure great idea to me; I never thought or dreamed to see him in the flesh, but t'other day I rescued him from a stall in Barbican, and brought him off in triumph. He comes to greet Coleridge's acceptance, for his shoe-latchets I am unworthy to unloose. Yet there are pretty pro's and con's, and such unsatisfactory learning in him. Commend me to the question of etiquette—'*utrum annunciatio debuerit fieri per angelum*'—*Quæst.* 30, *Articulus* 2. I protest, till now I had thought Gabriel a fellow of some mark and likelihood, not a simple esquire, as I find him. Well, do not break your lay brains, nor I neither, with these curious nothings. They are nuts to our dear friend, whom hoping to see at your first friendly hint that it will be convenient, I end with begging our very kindest loves to Mrs. Gilman. We have had a sorry house of it here. Our spirits have been reduced till we were at hope's end what to do. Obliged to leave this house, and afraid to engage another, till, in extremity, I took the desperate resolve of kicking house and

all down, like Bunyan's pack; and here we are in a new life at board and lodging, with an honest couple our neighbours We have ridded ourselves of the cares of dirty acres; and the change, though of less than a week, has had the most beneficial effects on Mary already. She looks two years and a half younger for it. But we have had sore trials.

"God send us one happy meeting! Yours faithfully,

"C. LAMB.

"Chace-side, Enfield, 26th Oct., 1829."

The first result of the experiment was happy, as it brought improved health to Miss Lamb; to which Lamb refers in the following letter to his Suffolk friend, who had announced to him his appointment as assignee under a bankruptcy.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"December 8th, 1829.

"My dear B. B.—You are very good to have been uneasy about us, and I have the satisfaction to tell you that we are both in better health and spirits than we have been for a year or two past. The cause may not appear quite adequate when I tell you that a course of ill health and spirits brought us to the determination of giving up our house here, and we are boarding and lodging with a worthy couple, long inhabitants of Enfield, where everything is done for us without our trouble, further than a reasonable weekly payment. We should have done so before, but it is not easy to flesh and blood to give up an ancient establishment, to discard old Penates, and from housekeepers to turn housesharers. (N.B. We are not in the workhouse.) Diocletian, in his garden, found more repose than on the imperial seat of Rome; and the nob of Charles V. ached seldomer under a monk's cowl than under the diadem. With such shadows of assimilation we countenance our degradation. With such a load of dignified cares just removed from our shoulders, we can the more understand and pity the accession to yours, by the advancement to an assigneeship. I will tell you honestly, B. B., that it has been my long deliberate judgment that all bankrupts, of what denomination, civil or religious, soever, ought to be hanged. The pity of mankind has for ages run in a wrong direction, and been diverted from poor creditors (how many have I known sufferers! Hazlitt has just been defrauded of 100*l.* by his bookseller friends breaking) to scoundrel debtors. I know all the topics—that distress may overtake an honest man without his fault; that the failure of one that he trusted was his calamity, &c. Then let *both* be hanged. Oh how careful

this would make traders! These are my deliberate thoughts, after many years' experience in matters of trade. * * 'Trade will never flourish in this land till such a law is established. I write big, not to save ink, but eyes, mine having been troubled with reading through three folios of old Fuller in almost as few days, and I went to bed last night in agony, and am writing with a vial of eyewater before me, alternately dipping in vial and inkstand. This may inflame my zeal against bankrupts, but it was my speculation when I could see better. Half the world's misery (Eden else) is owing to want of money, and all that want is owing to bankrupts. I declare I would, if the state wanted practitioners, turn hangman myself, and should have great pleasure in hanging the first after my salutary law should be established. I have seen no annuals, and wish to see none. I like your fun upon them, and was quite pleased with Bowles's sonnet. Hood is, or was, at Brighton; but a note (prose or rhyme) to him, Robert-street, Adelphi, I am sure, would extract a copy of *his*, which also I have not seen.

"Wishing you and yours all health, I conclude while these frail glasses are, to me, eyes.

"C. L."

The following letter, written in the beginning of 1830, describes his landlord and landlady, and expresses, with a fine solemnity, the feelings which still held him at Enfield.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"And is it a year since we parted from you at the steps of Edmonton stage? There are not now the years that there used to be. The tale of the dwindled age of men, reported of successional mankind, is true of the same man only. We do not live a year in a year now. 'Tis a *punctum stans*. The seasons pass with indifference. Spring cheers not, nor winter heightens our gloom; autumn hath foregone its moralities—they are 'hey-pass re-pass,' as in a show-box. Yet, as far as last year recurs, for they scarce show a reflex now, they make no memory as heretofore, 'twas sufficiently gloomy. Let the sullen nothing pass. Suffice it, that after sad spirits, prolonged through many of its months, as it called them, we have cast our skins; have taken a farewell of the pompous, troublesome trifle called housekeeping, and are settled down into poor boarders and lodgers at next door with an old couple, the Baucis and Baucida of dull Enfield. Here we have nothing to do with our victuals but to eat them; with the garden but to see it grow; with the tax-gatherer but to hear him knock;

with the maid but to hear her scolded. Scot and lot, butcher, baker, are things unknown to us save as spectators of the pageant. We are fed we know not how; quietists, confiding ravens. We have the *otium pro dignitate*, a respectable insignificance. Yet in the self-condemned obliviousness, in the stagnation, some molesting yearnings of life, not quite killed, rise, prompting me that there was a London, and that I was of that old Jerusalem. In dreams I am in Fleet Market, but I wake and cry to sleep again. I die hard, a stubborn Eloisa in this detestable paraclete. What have I gained by health? Intolerable dulness. What by early hours and moderate meals? A total blank. Oh! never let the lying poets be believed who 'tice men from the cheerful haunts of streets, or think they mean it not of a country village. In the ruins of Palmyra I would gird myself up to solitude, or muse to the snoring of the Seven Sleepers; but to have a little teazing image of a town about one; country folks that do not look like country folks; shops two yards square, half a dozen apples, and two penn'orth of overlooked gingerbread for the lofty fruiterers of Oxford-street; and, for the immortal book and print stalls, a circulating library that stands still, where the show-picture is a last year's Valentine, and whither the fame of the last ten Scotch novels has not yet travelled (marry, they just begin to be conscious of Red Gauntlet); to have a new plastered flat church, and to be wishing that it was but a cathedral! The very blackguards here are degenerate; the topping gentry stock-brokers; the passengers too many to ensure your quiet, or let you go about whistling or gaping, too few to be the fine indifferent pageants of Fleet-street. Confining, room-keeping, thickest winter, is yet more bearable here than the gaudy months. Among one's books at one's fire by candle, one is soothed into an oblivion that one is not in the country; but with the light the green fields return, till I gaze, and in a calenture can plunge myself into St. Giles's. Oh! let no native Londoner imagine that health and rest, and innocent occupation, interchange of converse sweet, and recreative study, can make the country anything better than altogether odious and detestable. A garden was the primitive prison, till man, with Promethean felicity and boldness, luckily sinned himself out of it. Thence followed Babylon, Nineveh, Venice, London, haberdashers, goldsmiths taverns, playhouses, satires, epigrams, puns—these all came in on the town part, and the thither side of innocence. Man found out inventions. From my den I return you condolence for your decaying sight; not for anything there is to see in the country, but for the miss of the pleasure of reading a Lay

don newspaper. The poets are as well to listen to; anything high may, nay, must, be read out; you read it to yourself with an imaginary auditor; but the light paragraphs must be glid over by the proper eye; mouthing mumbles their gossamery substance. 'Tis these trifles I should mourn in fading sight. A newspaper is the single gleam of comfort I receive here; it comes from rich Cathay with tidings of mankind. Yet I could not attend to it, read out by the most beloved voice. But your eyes do not get worse, I gather. Oh for the collyrium of Tobias enclosed in a whiting's liver, to send you with no apocryphal good wishes! The last long time I heard from you you had knocked your head against something. Do not do so; for your head (I do not flatter) is not a nob, or the top of a brass nail, or the end of a ninepin—unless a Vulcanian hammer could fairly batter a 'Recluse' out of it; then would I bid the smirched god knock and knock lustily, the two-handed skinker. Mary must squeeze out a line *propriâ manu;* but, indeed, her fingers have been incorrigibly nervous to letter-writing for a long interval. 'Twill please you all to hear, that though I fret like a lion in a net, her present health and spirits are better than they have been for some time past; she is absolutely three years and a half younger, as I tell her, since we have adopted this boarding plan.

"Our providers are an honest pair, Dame W—— and her husband; he, when the light of prosperity shined on them, a moderately thriving haberdasher within Bow bells, retired since with something under a competence; writes himself gentleman; hath borne parish offices; sings fine old sea songs at threescore and ten; sighs only now and then when he thinks that he has a son on his hands about fifteen, whom he finds a difficulty in getting out into the world, and then checks a sigh with muttering, as I once heard him prettily, not meaning to be heard, 'I have married my daughter, however;' takes the weather as it comes; outsides it to town in severest season; and o' winter nights tells old stories not tending to literature (how comfortable to author-rid folks!) and has *one anecdote*, upon which and about forty pounds a year he seems to have retired in green old age. It was how he was a rider in his youth, travelling for shops, and once (not to balk his employer's bargain), on a sweltering day in August, rode foaming into Dunstable upon a mad horse, to the dismay and expostulatory wonderment of innkeepers, ostlers, &c., who declared they would not have bestrid the beast to win the Derby. Understand, the creature galled to death and desperation by gadflies, cormorant-winged, worse than beset Inachus's daughter. This he tells, this he brindles and burnishes on a win-

ter's eve; 'tis his star of set glory, his rejuveniscence, to scant upon. Far from me be it (*dii avertant*) to look a story in the mouth, or cruelly to surmise (as those who do he plunge of Curtius) that the inseparate conjuncture of a and beast, the centaur-phenomenon that staggered all Dum ble, might have been the effect of unromantic necessity; t the horsepart carried the reasoning, willy nilly; that ne must when such a devil drove; that certain spiral configu tions in the frame of T—— W——, unfriendly to alighti made the alliance more forcible than voluntary. Let h enjoy his fame for me, nor let me hint a whisper that sh dismount Bellerophon. But in case he was an involunta martyr, yet if in the fiery conflict he buckled the soul of a co stant haberdasher to him, and adopted his flames, let accid and he share the glory. You would all like T—— W— *[ ] How weak is painting to describe a man! S that he stands four feet and a nail high by his own yard me: ure, which, like the sceptre of Agamemnon, shall never spri again, still you have no adequate idea; nor when I tell y that his dear hump, which I have favoured in the pictu seems to me of the buffalo—indicative and repository of m qualities, a budget of kindnesses—still you have not the mi Knew you old Norris of the Temple? sixty years ours and c fathers' friend? He was not more natural to us than this c W., the acquaintance of scarce more weeks. Under his ro now ought I to take my rest, but that back-looking ambiti tells me I might yet be a Londoner! Well, if we ever move, we have encumbrances the less to impede us; all c furniture has faded under the auctioneer's hammer, going i nothing like the tarnished frippery of the prodigal, and v have only a spoon or two left to bless us. Clothed we can into Enfield, and naked we must go out of it. I would li in London shirtless, bookless. Henry Crabb is at Rom advices to that effect have reached Bury. But by solen legacy he bequeathed at parting (whether he should live die) a turkey of Suffolk to be sent every succeeding Chri mas to us and divers other friends. What a genuine old bac elor's action! I fear he will find the air of Italy too classi His station is in the Harz forest; his soul is be-Göethe Miss Kelly we never see; Talfourd not this half year; th latter flourishes, but the exact number of his children, G forgive me, I have utterly forgotten; we single people a often out in our count there. Shall I say two? We s scarce anybody. Can I cram loves enough to you all in th little O? Excuse particularizing. C. L."

* Here was a rude sketch of a gentleman answering to the description.

A letter which, addressed to Mr. Gilman, was intended both for him and his great guest Coleridge, gives another version of the same character. "One anecdote" of T—— W—— is repeated in it, with the substitution of Devizes for Dunstable. Which is the veritable place must remain a curious question for future descant, as the hero is dead, and his anecdote survives alone in these pages. It seems that Miss Lamb had accompanied his landlord on a little excursion.

TO MR. GILMAN.

"Dear G.—The excursionists reached home and the good town of Enfield a little after four, without slip or dislocation. Little has transpired concerning the events of the back journey, save that of passing the house of Squire Mellish, situate a stone bow's cast from the hamlet. Father W——, with a good-natured wonderment, exclaimed, 'I cannot think what is gone of Mr. Mellish's rooks. I fancy they have taken flight somewhere, but I have missed them two or three years past.' All this while, according to his fellow-traveller's report, the rookery was darkening the air above with undiminished population, and deafening all ears but his with their cawings. But nature has been gently withdrawing such phenomena from the notice of two of T—— W——'s senses, from the time he began to miss the rooks. T. W—— has passed a retired life in this hamlet of thirty or forty years, living upon the minimum which is consistent with gentility, yet a star among the mine gentry, receiving the bows of the tradespeople and courtesies of the almswomen daily. Children venerate him not less for his external show of gentry than they wonder at him for a gentle rising endorsation of the person, not amounting to a hump, or if a hump, innocuous as the hump of the buffalo, and coronative of as mild qualities. 'Tis a throne on which patience seems to sit—the proud perch of a self-respecting humility, stooping with condescension. Thereupon the cares of life have sat, and rid him easily. For he has thrid the *angustiæ domûs* with dexterity. Life opened upon him with comparative brilliancy. He set out a rider or traveller for a wholesale house, in which capacity he tells of many hair-breadth escapes that befell him; one especially, how he rode a mad horse into the town of Devizes; how horse and rider arrived in a foam, to the utter consternation of the expostulating hostlers, innkeepers, &c. It seems it was sultry weather, piping hot; the steed tormented into phrensy with gadflies, long past being roadworthy; but safety and the interest of the house he rode for were incompatible things; a fall in serge cloth was expected, and a mad entrance they made of it.

Whether the exploit was purely voluntary, or partially; or whether a certain personal disfiguration in the man-part of this extraordinary centaur (nonassistive to partition of natures) might not enforce the conjunction, I stand not to inquire. I look not with 'skew eyes into the deeds of heroes. The hosier that was burnt with his shop in Field-lane, on Tuesday night, shall have passed to heaven for me like a Marian martyr, provided always that he consecrated the fortuitous incremation with a short ejaculation in the exit, as much as if he had taken his state degrees of martyrdom *in formâ* in the market vicinage. There is adoptive as well as acquisitive sacrifice. Be the animus what it might, the fact is indisputable, that this composition was seen flying all abroad, and mine host of Daintry may yet remember its passing through his town, if his scores are not more faithful than his memory. After this exploit (enough for one man), T—— W—— seems to have subsided into a less hazardous occupation; and in the twenty-fifth year of his age we find him a haberdasher in Bow-lane; yet still retentive of his early riding (though leaving it to rawer stomachs), and Christmasly at night sithence to this last, and to his latest Christmas, hath he, doth he, and shall he, tell after supper the story of the insane steed and the desperate rider. Save for Bedlam or Luke's, no eye could have guessed that melting day what house he rid for. But he reposes on his bridles, and after the ups and downs (metaphoric only) of a life behind the counter—hard riding sometimes, I fear, for poor T. W.—with the scrapings together of the shop, and *one anecdote*, he hath finally settled at Enfield; by hard economizing, gardening, building for himself, hath reared a mansion; married a daughter; qualified a son for a counting-house; gotten the respect of high and low; served for self or substitute the greater parish offices; hath a special voice at vestries; and, domiciliating us, hath reflected a portion of his housekeeping respectability upon your humble servants. We are greater, being his lodgers, than when we were substantial renters. His name is a passport to take off the sneers of the native Enfielders against obnoxious foreigners. We are endenizened. Thus much of T. W—— have I thought fit to acquaint you, that you may see the exemplary reliance upon Providence with which I intrusted so dear a charge as my own sister to the guidance of the man that rode the mad horse into Devizes. To come from his heroic character, all the amiable qualities of domestic life concentre in this tamed Bellerophon. He is excellent over a glass of grog; just as pleasant without it; laughs when he hears a joke and when (which is much oftener) he hears it not; sings glorious old sea songs on fes-

tuval nights; and but upon a slight acquaintance of two years, Coleridge is as dear a deaf old man to us as old Norris, rest his soul! was after fifty. To him and his scanty literature (what there is of it, *sound*) have we flown from the metropolis and its cursed annualists, reviewers, authors, and the whole muddy ink press of that stagnant pool.

"Now, Gilman again, you do not know the treasures of the Fullers. I calculate on having massy reading till Christmas. All I want here is books of the true sort, not those things in boards that moderns mistake for books, what they club for at book-clubs.

"I did not mean to cheat you with a blank side, but my eye smarts, for which I am taking medicine, and abstain, this day at least, from any aliments but milk porridge, the innocent taste of which I am anxious to renew after a half century's disacquaintance. If a blot fall here like a tear, it is not pathos, but an angry eye.

"Farewell, while my *specilla* are sound.

"Yours, and yours,

"C. LAMB."

The next letter to Coleridge's excellent host is a reply to a request from an importunate friend of his correspondent, that he would write something on behalf of the Spitalfields' weavers. Alien as such a task would have been to his habits of thought or composition, if Lamb had been acquainted with that singular race, living in their high, narrow, overpeopled houses, in the thickest part of London, yet almost apart from the great throng of its dwellers; indulging their straitened sympathies in the fostering of the more tender animals, as rabbits and pigeons, nurtured in their garrets or cellars; or cultivating some stunted plants with an intuitive love of nature, unfed by any knowledge of verdure beyond Hoxton; their painful industry, their uneducated morals, their eager snatches of pleasure from the only quickening of their intellect, by liquors, which make glad the heart of man; he would scarcely have refused the offered retainer for them.

TO MR. GILMAN.

"My dear G.—Your friend B—— (for I knew him immediately by the smooth satinity of his style) must excuse me for advocating the cause of his friends in Spitalfields. The fact is, I am retained by the Norwich people, and have already appeared in their paper under the signatures of 'Lucius Sergius,' 'Bluff,' 'Broadcloth,' 'No-Trade-to-the-Woollen-Trade,' 'Anti-Plush,' &c., in defence of druggets and long

camlets. And without this pre-engagement, I feel I should naturally have chosen a side opposite to ——, for in the silken seemingness of his nature there is that which offends me. My flesh tingles at such caterpillars. He shall not crawl me over. Let him and his workmen sing the old burden,

'Heighho, ye weavers!'

for any aid I shall offer them in this emergency. I was over Saint Luke's the other day with my friend Tuthill, and mightily pleased with one of his contrivances for the comfort and amelioration of the students. They have double cells, in which a pair may lie feet to feet horizontally, and chat the time away as rationally as they can. It must certainly be more sociable for them these warm raving nights. The right-hand truckle in one of these friendly recesses, at present vacant, was preparing, I understood, for Mr. Irving. Poor fellow! it is time he removed from Pentonville. I followed him as far as to Highbury the other day, with a mob at his heels, calling out upon Ermigiddon, who, I suppose, is some Scotch moderator. He squinted out his favourite eye last Friday, in the fury of possession, upon a poor woman's shoulders that was crying matches, and has not missed it. The companion truck, as far as I could measure it with my eye, would conveniently fit a person about the length of Coleridge, allowing for a reasonable drawing up of the feet, not at all painful. Does he talk of moving this quarter? You and I have too much sense to trouble ourselves with revelations; marry, to the same in Greek, you may have something professionally to say. Tell C. that he was to come and see us some fine day. Let it be before he moves, for in his new quarters he will necessarily be confined in his conversation to his brother prophet. Conceive the two rabbis foot to foot, for there are no Gamaliels there to affect a humbler posture! All are masters in that Patmos, where the law is perfect equality; Latmos, I should rather say, for they will be Luna's twin darlings; her affection will be ever at the full. Well, keep *your* brains moist with gooseberry this mad March, for the devil of exposition seeketh dry places.

"C. L."

Here is a brief reply to the questioning of Lamb's true-hearted correspondent, Barton, who doubted of the personal verity of Lamb's "Joseph Paice," the most polite of the old Templars. This friend's personal acquaintance with Lamb had not been frequent enough to teach him, that if Lamb could innocently "lie like truth," he made up for this free-

dom by sometimes making truth look like a lie. His account of Mr. Paice's politeness could be attested to the letter by living witnesses.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Dear B. B.—To reply to you by return of post, I must gobble up my dinner, and despatch this in *propriâ personâ* to the office to be in time. So take it from me hastily, that you are perfectly welcome to furnish A. C. with the scrap, which I had almost forgotten writing. The more my character comes to be known, the less my veracity will come to be suspected. Time every day clears up some suspected narrative of Herodotus, Bruce, and others of us great travellers. Why, that Joseph Paice was as real a person as Joseph Hume, and a great deal pleasanter. A careful observer of life, Bernard, has no need to invent. Nature romances it for him. Dinner-plates rattle, and I positively shall incur indigestion by carrying it half concocted to the posthouse. Let me congratulate you on the spring coming in, and do you, in return, condole with me on the winter going out. When the old one goes, seldom comes a better. I dread the prospect of summer, with his all day-long days. No need of his assistance to make country-places dull. With fire and candlelight, I can dream myself in Holborn; with lightsome skies shining in to bedtime, I cannot. This is Meschek, and these are the tents of Kedar. I would dwell in the skirts of Jericho rather, and think every blast of the coming in mail a ram's-horn. Give me old London at fire and plague time, rather than these tepid gales, healthy country airs, and purposeless exercise.

"Leg of mutton absolutely on the table.

"Take our hasty loves and a short farewell.

"C. L."

A rural conflagration at this time kindled the noblest range of Lamb's thoughts, which he expressed in the following letter. The light he flashes on the strange power exerted by the half-witted incendiary shows in it something of a fearful grandeur. It is addressed

TO MR. DYER.

"Dear Dyer—I should have written before to thank you for your kind letter, written with your own hand. It glads me to see your writing. It will give you pleasure to hear that, after so much illness, we are in tolerable health and spirits once more. Poor Enfield, that has been so peaceful hitherto, has caught the inflammatory fever; the tokens are upon her; and a

great fire was blazing last night in the barns and haystacks of a farmer about half a mile from us. Where will these things end? There is no doubt of its being the work of some ill-disposed rustic, but how is he to be discovered? They go to work in the dark with strange chymical preparations, unknown to our forefathers. There is not even a dark lantern, to have a chance of detecting these Guy Fauxes. We are past the iron age, and are got into the fiery age, undreamed of by Ovid You are lucky in Clifford's Inn, where I think you have few ricks or stacks worth the burning. Pray keep as little corn by you as you can, for fear of the worst. It was never good times in England since the poor began to speculate upon their condition. Formerly they jogged on with as little reflection as horses. The whistling ploughman went cheek by jowl with his brother that neighed. Now the biped carries a box of phosphorus in his leather breeches, and in the dead of night the half-illuminated beast steals his magic potion into a cleft in the barn, and half the country is grinning with new fires. Farmer Graystock said something to the touchy rustic that he did not relish, and he writes his distaste in flames. What a power to intoxicate his rude brains, just muddlingly awake to perceive that something is wrong in the social system—what a hellish faculty above gunpowder! Now the rich and poor are fairly pitted. We shall see who can hang or burn the fastest. It is not always revenge that stimulates these kindlings. There is a love of exciting mischief! Think of a disrespected clod, that was trod into earth; that was nothing; on a sudden, by damned arts, refined into an exterminating angel, devouring the fruits of the earth and their growers in a mass of fire; what a new existence! What a temptation above Lucifer's! Why, here was a spectacle last night for a whole country, a bonfire visible to London, alarming her guilty towers, and shaking the monument with an ague fit, all done by a little vial of phosphor in a clown's fob. How he must grin and shake his empty noddle in clouds! The Vulcanian epicure! Alas! can we ring the bells backward? Can we unlearn the arts that pretend to civilize, and then burn the world? There is a march of science; but who shall beat the drums for its retreat? Who shall persuade the boor that phosphor will not ignite? Seven goodly stacks of hay, with corn-barns proportionable, lie smoking ashes and chaff, which man and beast would sputter out and reject like those apples of asphaltes and bitumen. The food for the inhabitants of earth will quickly disappear. Hot rolls may say, Fuimus panes, fuit quartern-loaf, et ingens gloria apple-pasty-orum. That the good old munching system may last thy time and

mine, good un-incendiary George! is the devout prayer of thine.

"To the last crust,
"C. LAMB."

Lamb's kindness to Hone was not confined to his contributions to the "Every-day Book" and the "Table Book." Those pleasant and blameless works had failed to supply an adequate income to a numerous family, and Lamb was desirous of interesting his influential friends in a new project of Hone's, to establish himself in a coffee-house conducted in a superior style. With this view he wrote to Southey, who, nobly forgetting Hone's old heresies in politics or parodies, had made a genial reference to his late work in his "Life of Bunyan."

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"Dear Southey—My friend Hone, whom you would like *for a friend*, I found deeply impressed with your generous notice of him in your beautiful 'Life of Bunyan,' which I am just now full of. He has written to you for leave to publish a certain good-natured letter. I write not this to enforce his request, for we are fully aware that the refusal of such publication would be quite consistent with all that is good in your character. Neither he nor I expect it from you, nor exact it; but if you would consent to it, you would have me obliged by it as well as him. What right I have to interfere you best know. Look on me as a dog who went once temporarily insane, and bit you, and now begs for a crust. Will you set your wits to a dog?

"Our object is to open a subscription, which my friends of the —— are most willing to forward him, but think that a leave from you to publish would aid it.

"But not an atom of respect or kindness will or shall abate in either of us if you decline it. Have this strongly in your mind.

"Those 'Every-day' and 'Table' Books will be a treasure a hundred years hence, but they have failed to make Hone's fortune.

"Here his wife and all his children are about me, gaping for coffee customers; but how should they come in, seeing no pot boiling!

"Enough of Hone. I saw Coleridge a day or two since. He has had some severe attack, not paralytic; but, if I had not heard of it, I should not have found it out. He looks, and especially speaks, strong. How are all the Wordsworths

and all the Southeys, whom I am obliged to you if you have not brought up haters of the name of

"C. LAMB.

"P.S.—I have gone lately into the acrostic line. I find genius (such as I had) declines with me, but I get clever. Do you know anybody that wants charades or such things for albums? I do 'em at so much a sheet. Perhaps an epigram (not a very happy-gram) I did for a schoolboy yesterday may amuse. I pray Jove he may not get a flogging for any false quantity; but 'tis, with one exception, the only Latin verses I have made for forty years, and I did it 'to order.'

CUIQUE SUUM.

Adsciscit sibi divitias et opes alienas
Fur, rapiens, spolians, quod mihi, quod-que tibi,
Proprium erat, temnens hæc verba, meum-que, tuum-que;
Omne suum est: tandem Cui-que Suum tribuit.
Dat vesti collum; restes, vah! carnifici dat;
Se se Diabolo, sic bene; Cuique Suum.

"I write from Hone's, therefore Mary cannot send her love to Mrs. Southey, but I do.

"Yours ever,
"C. L."

In 1830 Lamb took a journey to Bury St. Edmund's, to fetch Miss Isola to her adopted home, from a visit which had been broken by her illness. It was on his return that Lamb's repartee to the query of the statistical gentleman as to the prospects of the turnip crop, which has been repeatedly published, was made. The following is his own version of it, contained in a letter addressed to Miss Isola's hostess on their arrival.

"A rather talkative gentleman, but very civil, engaged me in a discourse for full twenty miles on the probable advantages of steam carriages, which, being merely problematical, I bore my part in with some credit, in spite of my totally un-engineer-like faculties. But when, somewhere about Stanstead, he put an unfortunate question to me as to the 'probability of its turning out a good turnip season,' and when I, who am still less of an agriculturist than a steam philosopher, not knowing a turnip from a potato ground, innocently made answer that 'I believed it depended very much upon boiled legs of mutton,' my unlucky reply set Miss Isola a laughing to a degree that disturbed her tranquillity for the only moment in our journey. I am afraid my credit sank very low with my other fellow-traveller, who had thought he had met with a well-informed

passenger, which is an accident so desirable in a stagecoach. We were rather less communicative, but still friendly, the rest of the way."

To the same lady, having sent him an acrostic on his sister's name, he replied with a letter which contained one on hers, and the following notice of his own talent in the acrostic line.

"Dear Madam—I do assure you that your verses gratified me very much, and my sister is quite *proud* of them. For the first time in my life I congratulated myself upon the shortness and meanness of my name. Had it been for Schwartzenberg or Esterhazy, it would have put you to some puzzle. I am afraid I shall sicken you of acrostics, but this last was written *to order*. I beg you to have inserted in your county paper something like this advertisement. 'To the nobility, gentry, and others about Bury. C. Lamb respectfully informs his friends and the public in general, that he is leaving off business in the acrostic line, as he is going into an entirely new line. Rebuses and charades done as usual, and upon the old terms. Also, epitaphs to suit the memory of any person deceased.'

"I thought I had adroitly escaped the rather unpliable name of 'Williams' curtailing your poor daughter's verses to her proper surnames, but it seems you would not let me off so easily. If these trifles amuse you, I am paid. Though really 'tis an operation so much like—'A, apple-pie; B, bit it.' To make amends, I request leave to lend you the 'Excursion,' and to recommend, in particular, the 'Churchyard Stories;' in the seventh book, I think. They will strengthen the tone of your mind after its weak diet on acrostics."

* * * * * *

In 1830 a small volume of poems, the gleanings of some years, during which Lamb had devoted himself to prose, under his name of "Elia," was published by Mr. Moxon, under the title of "Album Verses," and which Lamb, in token of his strong regard, dedicated to the publisher. An unfavourable review of them in the Literary Gazette produced some verses from Southey, which were inserted in the Times, and of which the following, as evincing his unchanged friendship, may not unfitly be inserted here. The residue, being more severe on Lamb's critics than Lamb himself would have wished, may now be spared.

Charles Lamb, to those who know thee justly dear
For rarest genius, and for sterling worth,
Unchanging friendship, warmth of heart sincere,
And wit that never gave an ill thought birth,

Nor ever in its sport infix'd a sting;
To us, who have admired and loved thee long,
It is a proud as well as pleasant thing
To hear thy good report, now borne along
Upon the honest breath of public praise:
We know that, with the elder sons of song,
In honouring whom thou hast delighted still,
Thy name shall keep its course to after days.

This year closed upon the grave of Hazlitt. Lamb visited him frequently during his last illness, and attended his funeral. They had taken great delight in each other's conversation for many years; and though the indifference of Lamb to the objects of Hazlitt's passionate love or hatred, as a politician, at one time produced a coolness, the warmth of the defence of Hazlitt in "Elia's Letter to Southey" renewed the old regard of the philosopher, and set all to rights. Hazlitt, in his turn, as an Edinburgh Reviewer, had opportunities which he delighted to use, of alluding to Lamb's Specimens and Essays, and making him amends for the severity of ancient criticism, which the editor, who could well afford the genial inconsistency, was too generous to exclude. The conduct, indeed, of that distinguished person to Hazlitt, especially in his last illness, won Lamb's admiration, and wholly effaced the recollection of the time when, thirty years before, his play had been denied critical mercy under his rule. Hazlitt's death did not so much shock Lamb at the time, as it weighed down his spirits afterward, when he felt the want of those essays which he had used periodically to look for with eagerness in the magazines and reviews, which they alone made tolerable to him; and when he realized the dismal certainty that he should never again enjoy that rich discourse of old poets and painters with which so many a long winter's night had been gladdened, or taste life with an additional relish in the keen sense of enjoyment which endeared it to his companion.

CHAPTER XVIII.

[1830 to 1834.]

Lamb's last Letters and Death.

After the year 1830 Lamb's verses and essays were chiefly given to his friends; the former consisting of album contributions, the latter of little essences of observation and criticism. Mr. Moxon, having established a new magazine, called the

"Englishman's Magazine," induced him to write a series of papers, some of which were not inferior to his happiest essays. At this time his old and excellent friend, Dyer, was much annoyed by some of his witticisms—which, in truth, were only Lamb's modes of expressing his deep-seated regard; and at the quotation of a couplet in one of his early poems, which he had suppressed as liable to be misconstrued by Mr. Rogers. Mr. Barker had unfortunately met with the unexpurgated edition which contained this dubious couplet, and in his "Memorials of Dr. Parr" quoted the passage; which, to Mr. Dyer's delicate feelings,* conveyed the apprehension that Mr. Rogers would treat the suppression as colourable, and refer the revival of the lines to his sanction. The following letter was written to dispel those fears from his mind.

TO MR. DYER.

"Dear Dyer—Mr. Rogers and Mr. Rogers's friends are perfectly assured that you never intended any harm by an innocent couplet, and that in the revivification of it by blundering Barker you had no hand whatever. To imagine that, at this time of day, Rogers broods over a fantastic expression of more than thirty years' standing, would be to suppose him indulging his 'pleasures of memory' with a vengeance. You never penned a line which for its own sake you need, dying, wish to blot. You mistake your heart if you think you *can* write a lampoon. Your whips are rods of roses. Your spleen has ever had for its object vices, not the vicious; abstract offences, not the concrete sinner. But you are sensitive, and wince as much at the consciousness of having committed a compliment as another man would at the perpetration of an affront. But do not lug me into the same soreness of conscience with yourself. I maintain, and will to the last hour, that I never writ of you but con amore. That if any allusion was made

* Mr. Dyer also complained to Mr. Lamb of some suggestions in Elia, which annoyed him, not so much for his own sake as for the sake of others who, in the delicacy of his apprehensiveness, he thought might feel aggrieved by imputations which were certainly not intended, and which they did not deserve. One passage in Elia, hinting that he had been hardly dealt with by school masters, under whom he had been a teacher in his younger days, hurt him; as, in fact, he was treated by them with the most considerate generosity and kindness. Another passage which he regarded as implying that he had been underpaid by booksellers also vexed him; as his labours have always been highly esteemed, and have, according to the rate of remuneration of learned men, been well compensated by Mr. Valpy and others. The truth is, that Lamb wrote from a vague recollection, without intending any personal reference at all to Mr. Dyer himself, and only seeking to illustrate the pure, simple, and elevated character of a man of letters, "unspotted from the world." Probably no one has ever applied these suggestions to the parties for whose reputation Mr. Dyer has been so honourably anxious but himself; but it is due to his feelings to state that they are founded in error.

to your near-sightedness, it was not for the purpose of mocking an infirmity, but of connecting it with scholar-like habits; for, is it not erudite and scholarly to be somewhat near of sight before age naturally brings on the malady? You could not then plead the obrepens senectus. Did I not, moreover, make it an apology for a certain *absence*, which some of your friends may have experienced when you have not on a sudden made recognition of them in a casual street-meeting? And did I not strengthen your excuse for this slowness of recognition by further accounting morally for the present engagement of your mind in worthy objects? Did I not, in your person, make the handsomest apology for absent-of-mind people that was ever made? If these things be not so, I never knew what I wrote or meant by my writing, and have been penning libels all my life without being aware of it. Does it follow that I should have expressed myself exactly in the same way of those dear old eyes of yours *now*, now that Father Time has conspired with a hard taskmaster to put a last extinguisher upon them? I should as soon have insulted the Answerer of Salmasius, when he awoke up from his ended task, and saw no more with mortal vision. But you are many films removed yet from Milton's calamity. You write perfectly intelligibly. Marry, the letters are not all of the same size or tallness; but that only shows your proficiency in the *hands*, text, German-hand, court-hand, sometimes law-hand, and affords variety. You pen better than you did a twelvemonth ago; and if you continue to improve, you bid fair to win the golden pen which is the prize at your young gentlemen's academy. But you must be aware of Valpy and his printing-house, that hazy cave of Trophonius, out of which it was a mercy that you escaped with a glimmer. Beware of MSS. and Variæ Lectiones. Settle the text for once in your mind, and stick to it. You have some years' good sight in you yet if you do not tamper with it. It is not for you (for *us* I should say) to go poring into Greek contractions, and stargazing upon slim Hebrew points. We have yet the sight

> Of sun, and moon, and star throughout the year,
> And man and woman.

You have vision enough to discern Mrs. Dyer from the other comely gentlewoman who lives up at staircase No. 5; or, if you should make a blunder in the twilight, Mrs. Dyer has too much good sense to be jealous for a mere effect of imperfect optics. But don't try to write the Lord's Prayer, Creed, and Ten Commandments in the compass of a halfpenny; nor run after a midge or a mote to catch it, and leave off hunting for needles in bushels of hay, for all these things strain the eyes.

The snow is six feet deep in some parts here. I must put on jack-boots to get at the postoffice with this. It is not good for weak eyes to pore upon snow too much. It lies in drifts. I wonder what its drift is; only that it makes good pancakes, remind Mrs. Dyer. It turns a pretty green world into a white one. It glares too much for an innocent colour, methinks. I wonder why you think I dislike gilt edges. They set off a letter marvellously. Yours, for instance, looks for all the world like a tablet of curious *hieroglyphics* in a gold frame. But don't go and lay this to your eyes. You always wrote hieroglyphically, yet not to come up to the mystical notations and conjuring characters of Doctor Parr. You never wrote what I call a schoolmaster's hand, like C——; nor a woman's hand, like S ——; nor a Missal hand, like Porson; nor an all-of-the-wrong-side sloping hand, like Miss H——; nor a dogmatic, Mede-and-Persian, peremptory hand, like R——; but you ever wrote what I call a Grecian's hand; what the Grecians write (or used) at Christ's Hospital; such as Whalley would have admired, and Boyer have applauded, but Smith or Atwood (writing-masters) would have horsed you for. Your boy-of-genius hand and your mercantile hand are various. By your flourishes, I should think you never learned to make eagles, or corkscrews, or flourish the governors' names in the writing-school; and, by the tenour and cut of your letters, I suspect you were never in it at all. By the length of this scrawl you will think I have a design on your optics; but I have writ as large as I could, out of respect to them; too large, indeed, for beauty. Mine is a sort of deputy Grecian's hand; a little better, and more of a worldly hand than a Grecian's, but still remote from the mercantile. I don't know how it is, but I keep my rank in fancy still since schooldays. I can never forget I was a deputy Grecian! And writing to you, or to Coleridge, besides affection, I feel a reverential deference as to Grecians still. I keep my soaring way above the Great Erasmians, yet far beneath the other. Alas! what am I now? what is a Leadenhall clerk or India pensioner to a deputy Grecian? How art thou fallen, oh Lucifer! Just room for our loves to Mrs. D., &c.

"C. Lamb."

The following letter is

TO MR. CAREY.

"Assidens est mihi bona soror, Euripiden evolvens, donum vestrum, carissime Carey, pro quo gratias agimus, lecturi atque iterum lecturi idem. Pergratus est liber ambobus, nempe

'Sacerdotis Commiserationis,' sacrum opus a te ipso Humanissimæ Religionis Sacerdote dono datum. Lachrymantes gavisuri sumus; est ubi dolor fiat voluptas; nec semper dulce mihi est ridere; aliquando commutandum est he! he! he! cum heu! heu! heu!

"A Musis Tragicis me non penitus abhorruisse testis sit Carmen Calamitosum, nescio quo autore linguâ prius vernaculâ scriptum, et nuperrimè a me ipso Latine versum, scilicet; 'Tom Tom of Islington.' Tenuistine?

'Thomas Thomas de Islington,
Uxorem duxit Die quâdam Solis,
Abduxit domum sequenti die,
Emit baculum subsequenti,
Vapulat illa posterâ,
Ægrotat succedenti, Mortua fit crastinâ.'

Et miro gaudio afficitur Thomas luce posterâ quod subsequenti (nempe, Dominicâ) uxor sit efferenda.

'En Iliades Domesticas!
En circulum calamitatum!
Planè hebdomadalem tragœdiam.'

I nunc et confer Euripiden vestram his luctibus, hâc morte uxoriâ; confer Alcesten! Hecuben! quas non antiquas Heroinas Dolorosas.

"Suffundor genas lachrymis tantas strages revolvens. Quid restat nisi quod Tecum Tuam Caram salutamus ambosque valere jubeamus, nosmet ipsi bene valentes.

"ELIA.

'Datum ab agro Enfeldiensi, Maii die sextâ, 1831."

The death of Munden reviving his recollections of "the veteran comedian," called forth the following letter of 11th February, 1832, to the editor of the *Athenæum*, whom Lamb had, for a long time, numbered among his friends.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "ATHENÆUM."

"Dear Sir—Your communication to me of the death of Munden made me weep. Now, sir, I am not of the melting mood; but, in these serious times, the loss of half the world's fun is no trivial deprivation. It was my loss (or *gain* shall I call it) in the early time of my play-going, to have missed all Munden's acting. There was only he and Lewis at Covent Garden, while Drury Lane was exuberant with Parsons, Dodd, &c., such a comic company as, I suppose, the stage never showed. Thence, in the evening of my life I had Munden all to myself, more mellowed, richer, perhaps, than ever. I cannot say what his change of faces produced in me. It was not acting. He was not one of my 'old actors.' It might be

better. His power was extravagant. I saw him one evening in three drunken characters. Three farces were played. One part was *Dosey*—I forget the rest; but they were so discriminated that a stranger might have seen them all, and not have dreamed that he was seeing the same actor. I am jealous for the actors who pleased my youth. He was not a Parsons or a Dodd, but he was more wonderful. He seemed as if he could *do* anything. He was not an actor, but something *better*, if you please. Shall I instance *Old Foresight*, in 'Love for Love,' in which Parsons was at once the old man, the astrologer, &c. Munden dropped the old man, the doter—which makes the character—but he substituted for it a moon-struck character, a perfect abstraction from this earth, that looked as if he had newly come down from the planets. Now *that* is not what I call *acting*. It might be better. He was imaginative; he could impress upon an audience an *idea*—the low one, perhaps, of a leg of mutton and turnips; but such was the grandeur and singleness of his expressions, that that single expression would convey to all his auditory a notion of all the pleasures they had all received from all the legs of mutton *and turnips* they had ever eaten in their lives. Now this is not *acting*, nor do I set down Munden among my old actors. He was only a wonderful man, exerting his vivid impressions through the agency of the stage. In one only thing did I see him *act*—that is, support a character; it was in a wretched farce, called 'Johnny Gilpin,' for Dowton's benefit, in which he did a cockney. The thing ran but one night; but when I say that Liston's *Lubin Log* was nothing to it, I say little; it was transcendent. And here let me say of actors, *envious* actors, that of *Munden*, Liston was used to speak, almost with the enthusiasm due to the dead, in terms of such allowed superiority to every actor on the stage, and this at a time when Munden was gone by in the world's estimation, that it convinced me that artists (in which term I include poets, painters, &c.) are not so envious as the world think. I have little time, and therefore enclose a criticism on Munden's *Old Dosey* and his general acting,* by a friend.

"C. LAMB."

"Mr. Munden appears to us to be the most *classical* of actors. He is that in high farce which Kemble was in high tragedy. The lines of these great artists are, it must be admitted, sufficiently distinct; but the same elements are in both—the same directness of purpose, the same singleness of

* A little article inserted in "The Champion" before Lamb wrote his essay on the Acting of Munden. Lamb's repetition may cast on it sufficient interest to excuse its repetition here.

aim, the concentration of power, the same iron-casing of inflexible manner, the same statue-like precision of gesture, movement, and attitude. The hero of farce is as little affected with impulses from without as the retired Prince of Tragedians. There is something solid, sterling, almost adamantine, in the building up of his most grotesque characters. When he fixes his wonder-working face in any of its most amazing varieties, it looks as if the picture were carved out from a rock by Nature in a sportive vein, and might last for ever. It is like what we can imagine a mask of the old Grecian comedy to have been, only that it lives, and breathes, and changes. His most fantastical gestures are the grand ideal of farce. He seems as though he belonged to the earliest and the stateliest age of comedy, when, instead of superficial foibles and the airy varieties of fashion, she had the grand asperities of man to work on, when her grotesque images had something romantic about them, and when humour and parody were themselves heroic. His expressions of feeling and bursts of enthusiasm are among the most genuine which we have ever felt. They seem to come up from a depth of emotion in the heart, and burst through the sturdy casing of manner with a strength which seems increased tenfold by its real and hearty obstacle. The workings of his spirit seem to expand his frame, till we can scarcely believe that by measure it is small; for the space which he fills in the imagination is so real, that we almost mistake it for that of corporeal dimensions. His *Old Dosey*, in the excellent farce of 'Past Ten o'Clock,' is his grandest effort of this kind, and we know of nothing finer. He seems to have a 'heart of oak' indeed. His description of a seafight is the most noble and triumphant piece of enthusiasm which we remember. It is as if the spirits of a whole crew of nameless heroes 'were swelling in his bosom.' We never felt so ardent and proud a sympathy with the valour of England as when we heard it. May health long be his, thus to do our hearts good—for we never saw any actor whose merits have the least resemblance to his even in species: and when his genius is withdrawn from the stage, we shall not have left even a term by which we can fitly describe it."

Coleridge, now in declining health, seems to have feared, from a long intermission of Lamb's visits to Highgate, that there was some estrangement between them, and to have written to Lamb under that fear. The following note shows how much he was mistaken.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"April 14, 1832.

"My dear Coleridge—Not an unkind thought has passed in my brain about you. But I have been wofully neglectful of you, so that I do not deserve to announce to you, that if I do not hear from you before then, I will set out on Wednesday morning to take you by the hand. I would do it this moment, but an unexpected visit might flurry you. I shall take silence for acquiescence, and come. I am glad you could write so long a letter. Old loves to, and hope of kind looks from, the Gilmans when I come.

"Yours, *semper idem*,

"C. L.

"If you ever thought an offence, much more wrote it, against me, it must have been in the times of Noah, and the great waters swept it away. Mary's most kind love, and may be a wrong prophet of your bodings!—here she is crying for mere love over your letter. I wring out less, but not sincerer showers.

"My direction is simply Enfield."

Lamb's regard for Mr. Carey had now ripened into a fast friendship; and, by agreement, he dined every third Wednesday in the month at the Museum. In general, these were occasions on which Lamb observed the strictest rules of temperance; but once accident of stomach or of sentiment caused a woful deviation, which Lamb deplored in the following letter.

TO MR. CAREY.

"I protest I know not in what words to invest my sense of the shameful violation of hospitality which I was guilty of on that fatal Wednesday. Let it be blotted from the calendar. Had it been committed at a layman's house, say a merchant's, or a manufacturer's, a cheesemonger's, or green-grocer's, or, to go higher, a barrister's, a member of parliament's, a rich banker's, I should have felt alleviation, a drop of self-pity. But to be seen deliberately to go out of the house of a clergyman drunk! a clergyman of the Church of England too! not that alone, but of an expounder of that dark Italian Hierophant, an exposition little short of *his* who dared unfold the Apocalypse; divine riddles both; and, without supernal grace vouchsafed, arks not to be fingered without present blasting to the touchers. And then, from what house! Not a common glebe, or vicarage (which yet had been shameful), but from a kingly repository of sciences, human and divine, with

the Primate of England for its guardian, arrayed in public majesty, from which the profane vulgar are bid fly. Could all those volumes have taught me nothing better? With feverish eyes on the succeeding dawn I opened upon the faint light, enough to distinguish, in a strange chamber, not immediately to be recognised, garters, hose, waistcoat, neckerchief, arranged in dreadful order and proportion, which I knew was not mine own. 'Tis the common symptom, on awaking, I judge my last night's condition from. A tolerable scattering on the floor I hail as being too probably my own, and if the candlestick be not removed, I assoil myself. But this finical arrangement, this finding everything in the morning in exact diametrical rectitude, torments me. Remote whispers suggested that I *coached* it home in triumph. Far be that from working pride in me, for I was unconscious of the locomotion. That a young Mentor accompanied a reprobate old Telemachus; that, the Trojan like, he bore his charge upon his shoulders, while the wretched incubus, in glimmering sense, hiccoughed drunken snatches of flying on the bats' wings after sunset. An aged servitor was also hinted at, to make disgrace more complete, one to whom my ignominy may offer further occasions of revolt (to which he was before too fondly inclining) from the true faith; for, at a sight of helplessness, what more was needed to drive him to the advocacy of independence? Occasion led me through Great Russel-street yesterday. I gazed at the great knocker. My feeble hands in vain essayed to lift it. I dreaded that Argus, who doubtless lanterned me out on that prodigious night. I called the Elginian marbles. They were cold to my suit. I shall never again, I said, on the wide gates unfolding, say, without fear of thrusting back, in a light but peremptory air, 'I am going to Mr. Carey's.' I passed by the walls of Balclutha. I had imaged to myself a zodiac of third Wednesdays irradiating by glimpses the Edmonton dulness. I dreamed of Highmore! I am de-vited to come on Wednesdays. Villanous old age, that, with second childhood, brings linked hand in hand her inseparable twin, new inexperience, which knows not effects of liquor. Where I was to have sat for a sober, middle-aged-and-a-half-gentleman, literary too, the neat fingered artist can educe no notions but of a dissoluted Silenus, lecturing natural philosophy to a jeering Chromius, or a Mnasilus. Pudet. From the context gather the lost name of ——."

In 1833 the choicest prose essays which Lamb had written since the publication of Elia were collected and published —as with a melancholy—under the title of "The last Es-

says of Elia," by Mr. Moxon. The work contains ample proof that the powers of the author had ripened rather than declined; for the paper called "Blakesmoor in H—shire," which imbodies his recollection of the old mansion in which his grandmother lived as housekeeper; those on Elliston, "Captain Jackson," and "The Old Margate Hoy," are among the most original, the least constrained, and the most richly coloured of his works. It was favourably noticed by almost all the principal critics—by many enthusiastically and sincerely praised; and an admirable notice in "The Quarterly" was published just after the foreboding of the title was fulfilled. His indisposition to write, however, increased; but in creating so much, excellent in its kind, so complete in itself, and so little tinged with alloy, he had, in truth, done enough, and had earned in literature, as in the drudgery of the desk, a right to repose. Yet, still ready to obey the call of friendship, he wrote both prologue and epilogue to Knowles's play of "The Wife;" the composition of which must have been mere labour, as they are only decently suited to the occasion, and have no mark or likelihood to repay the vanity of the poet.

Miss Isola's marriage, which left Lamb and his sister once more alone, induced them to draw a little nearer to their friends; and they fixed their abode in Church-street, Edmonton, within reach of the Enfield walks which custom had endeared to them. There with his sister he continued, regularly visiting London and dining with Mr. Carey on every third Wednesday. The following notelet is in answer to a letter enclosing a list of candidates for a widow's fund society for which he was entitled to vote.

TO MR. CAREY.

"Dear Sir—The unbounded range of munificence presented to my choice staggers me. What can twenty votes do for one hundred and two widows? I cast my eyes hopeless among the viduage. N.B. Southey* might be ashamed of himself to let his aged mother stand at the top of the list, with his 100*l.* a year and butt of sack. Sometimes I sigh over No. 12, Mrs. Carve-ill, some poor relation of mine, no doubt. No. 15 has my wishes, but then she is a Welsh one. I have Ruth upon No. 21. I'd tug hard for No. 24. No. 25 is an anomaly, there can be no Mrs. Hog. No. 34 ensnares me. No. 73 should not have met so foolish a person. No. 92 may bob it as she likes, but she catches no cherry of me. So I have even fixed at hap-hazard, as you'll see.

"Yours, every third Wednesday, C L"

* A Mrs. Southey headed the enclosed list.

Lamb was entirely destitute of what is commonly called "a taste for music." A few old tunes ran in his head; now and then the expression of a sentiment, though never of a song, touched him with rare and exquisite delight; and Braham in his youth, Miss Rennell, who died too soon, and who used to sing the charming air, "In infancy our hopes and fears," and Miss Burrell, won his ear and his heart. But, usually, music only confused him, and an opera—to which he once or twice tried to accompany Miss Isola—was to him a maze of sound in which he almost lost his wits. But he did not, therefore, take less pleasure in the success of Miss Clara Novello—whose family he had known for many years, and to whom he addressed the following lines, which were inserted in the "Athenæum" of July 26, in this his last year.

TO CLARA N——.

The gods have made me most unmusical,
With feelings that respond not to the call
Of stringed harp, or voice—obtuse and mute
To hautboy, sackbut, dulcimer, and flute;
King David's lyre, that made the madness flee
From Saul, had been but a Jew's-harp to me;
Theorbos, violins, French horns, guitars,
Leave in my wounded ears inflicted scars;
I hate those trills, and shakes, and sounds that float
Upon the captive air; I know no note,
Nor ever shall, whatever folks may say,
Of the strange mysteries of *Sol* and *Fa*;
I sit at oratorios like a fish,
Incapable of sound, and only wish
The thing was over. Yet do I admire,
Oh tuneful daughter of a tuneful sire,
Thy painful labours in a science, which
To your deserts I pray may make you rich
As much as you are loved, and add a grace
To the most musical Novello race.
Women lead men by the nose, some cynics say,
You draw them by the ear—a delicater way.

C. Lamb.

He had now to sustain the severest of his losses. After a long and painful illness, borne with a heroic patience, which concealed the intensity of his sufferings from the bystanders, Coleridge died. As in the instance of Hazlitt, Lamb did not feel the immediate blow so acutely as he himself expected; but the calamity sank deep into his mind, and was, I believe, seldom far from his thoughts. It had been arranged that the attendance at the funeral should be confined to the family of the departed poet and philosopher, and Lamb, therefore, was spared the misery of going through the dismal ceremony of mourning. For the first week he forbore to write; but at its close he addressed the following short letter to one of the

family of him whom he once so justly denominated Coleridge's "more than friend." Like most of Lamb's letters, it is undated, but the postmark is August 5, 1834.

TO THE REV. JAMES GILMAN.

"My dear Sir—The sad week being over, I must write to you to say that I was glad of being spared from attending; I have no words to express my feeling with you all. I can only say that when you think a short visit from me would be acceptable, when your father and mother shall be able to see me *with comfort*, I will come to the bereaved house. Express to them my tenderest regards, and hopes that they will continue our friends still. We both love and respect them as much as a human being can, and finally thank them with our hearts for what they have been to the poor departed.

"God bless you all.

"C. LAMB.

"Mr. Walden's, Church-street, Edmonton."

Shortly after, assured that his presence would be welcome, Lamb went to Highgate. There he asked leave to see the nurse who had attended upon Coleridge; and being struck and affected by the feeling she manifested towards his friend, insisted on her receiving five guineas from him—a gratuity which seemed almost incomprehensible to the poor woman, but which Lamb could not help giving as an immediate expression of his own gratitude. From her he learned the effort by which Coleridge had suppressed the expression of his sufferings, and the discovery affected him even more than the news of his death. He would startle his friends sometimes by suddenly exclaiming, "Coleridge is dead!" and then pass on to common themes, having obtained the momentary relief of oppressed spirits. He still continued, however, his monthly visits to Mr. Carey, and was ready to write an acrostic or a complimentary epigram at the suggestion of any friend. The following is the last of his effusions in verse.

TO MARGARET W——.

'Margaret, in happy hour
Christen'd from that humble flower
Which we a daisy* call!
May thy pretty namesake be
In all things a type of thee,
And image thee in all.

Like *it* you show a modest face,
An unpretending native grace;
The tulip and the pink,

* Marguerite, in French, signifies a daisy

The china and the damask rose,
And every flaunting flower that blows,
In the comparing shrink.

Of lowly fields you think no scorn;
Yet gayest gardens would adorn,
And grace, wherever set.
Home-seated in your lonely bower,
Or wedded—a transplanted flower—
I bless you, Margaret!

CHARLES LAMB.

Edmonton, Oct. 8, 1834.

A present of game from an unknown admirer produced the following acknowledgment in the Athenæum of 30th Novem ber, destined to be, in sad verity, the last essay of Elia.

THOUGHTS ON PRESENTS OF GAME, &c.

"We love to have our friend in the country sitting thus at our table *by proxy;* to apprehend his presence (though a hundred miles may be between us) by a turkey, whose goodly aspect reflects to us his 'plump corpusculum;' to taste him in grouse or woodcock; to feel him gliding down in the toast peculiar to the latter; to concorporate him in a slice of Canterbury brawn. This is, indeed, to have him within ourselves; to know him intimately; such participation is, methinks, *unitive*, as the old theologians phrase it."—*Last Essays of Elia.*

"Elia presents his acknowledgments to his 'Correspondent unknown' for a basket of prodigiously fine game. He takes for granted that so amiable a character must be a reader of the *Athenæum*, else he had meditated a notice in *The Times*. Now if this friend had consulted the Delphic oracle for a present suited to the palate of Elia, he could not have hit upon a morsel so acceptable. The birds he is barely thankful for; pheasants are poor *fowls* disguised in fine feathers. But a hare roasted hard and brown, with gravy and melted butter!—old Mr. Chambers, the sensible clergyman in Warwickshire, whose son's acquaintance has made many hours happy in the life of Elia, used to allow a pound of Epping to every hare. Perhaps that was overdoing it. But, in spite of the note of Philomel, who, like some fine poets, that think no scorn to adopt plagiarisms from a humble brother, reiterates every spring her cuckoo cry of 'Jug, Jug, Jug,' Elia pronounces that a hare, to be truly palated, must be roasted. Jugging sophisticates her. In *our* way it eats so 'crips,' as Mrs. Minikin says. Time was, when Elia was not arrived at his taste, that he preferred to all luxuries a roasted pig. But he disclaims all such green-sickness appetites in future, though he hath to acknowledge the receipt of many a delicacy in that kind from

correspondents—good, but mistaken men—in consequence of their erroneous supposition that he had carried up into mature life the prepossessions of childhood. From the worthy Vicar of Enfield he acknowledges a tithe contribution of extraordinary sapor. The ancients must have loved hares. Else why adopt the word *lepores* (obviously from *lepus*) but for some subtile analogy between the delicate flavour of the latter, and the finer relishes of wit in what we most poorly translate *pleasantries*. The fine madnesses of the poet are the very decoction of his diet. Thence is he hare-brained. Harum-scarum is a libellous unfounded phrase of modern usage. 'Tis true the hare is the most circumspect of animals, sleeping with her eye open. Her ears, ever erect, keep them in that wholesome exercise which conduces them to form the very tit-bit of the admirers of this noble animal. Noble will I call her in spite of her detractors, who, from occasional demonstration of the principle of self-preservation (common to all animals), infer in her a defect of heroism. Half a hundred horsemen, with thrice the number of dogs, scour the country in pursuit of puss across three counties; and because the well-flavoured beast, weighing the odds, is willing to evade the hue and cry, with her delicate ears shrinking perchance from discord—comes the grave naturalist, Linnæus perchance, or Buffon, and gravely sets down the hare as a—timid animal. Why Achilles or Bully Dawson would have declined the preposterous combat.

"In fact, how light of digestion we feel after a hare! How tender its processes after swallowing! What chyle it promotes! How ethereal! as if its living celerity were a type of its nimble coursing through the animal juices. The notice might be longer. It is intended less as a Natural History of the Hare than a cursory thanks to the country 'good Unknown.' The hare has many friends, but none sincerer than

"ELIA."

A short time only before Lamb's fatal illness, he yielded to my urgent importunity, and met a small party of his friends at dinner at my house, where we had provided for him some of the few articles of food which now seemed to hit his fancy, and among them the hare, which had supplanted pig in his just esteem, with the hope of exciting his very delicate appetite. We were not disappointed; he ate with a relish not usual with him of late years, and passed the evening in his happiest mood. Among the four or five who met him on this occasion, the last on which I saw him in health, were his old friends Mr. Barron Field, Mr. Procter, and Mr. Forster, the

author of the "Lives of Eminent English Statesmen," a friend of comparatively recent date, but one with whom Lamb found himself as much at home as if he had known him for years. Mr. Field, in a short but excellent memoir of Lamb, in the "Annual Biography and Obituary" of 1836, has brought this evening vividly to recollection; and I have a melancholy satisfaction in quoting a passage from it as he has recorded it After justly eulogizing Lamb's sense of "The Virtue of Suppression in Writing," Mr. Field proceeds:—

"We remember, at the very last supper we ate with him, he quoted a passage from Prior's 'Henry and Emma,' illustrative of this discipline; and yet he said that he loved Prior as much as any man, but that his 'Henry and Emma' was a vapid paraphrase of the old poem of 'The Nutbrowne Mayde.' For example, at the *dénouement* of the ballad Prior makes Henry rant out to his devoted Emma—

'In me behold the potent Edgar's heir,
Illustrious earl! him terrible in war.
Let Loire confess, for she has felt his sword,
And trembling fled before the British lord.'

And so on for a dozen couplets, heroic, as they are called. And then Mr. Lamb made us mark the modest simplicity with which the noble youth discloses himself to his mistress in the old poem:—

'Now, understand,
To Westmoreland,
Which is my heritage
(in a parenthesis, as it were),
I will you bring,
And with a ring,
By way of marriage,
I will you take,
And lady make,
As shortly as I can.
So have you won
An earle's son,
And not a vanquish'd man.'

"How he loved these old rhymes, and with what justice!"—p. 14, 15.

In December Mr. Lamb received a letter from a gentleman, a stranger to him—Mr. Childs, of Bungay, whose copy of "Elia" had been sent on an oriental voyage, and who, in order to replace it, applied to Mr. Lamb. The following in his reply.

TO MR. CHILD.

"Monday. Church-street, EDMONTON (not Enfield, as you erroneously direct yours).

"Dear Sir—The volume which you seem to want is not to be had for love or money. I with difficulty procured a copy for myself. Yours is gone to enlighten the tawny Hindoos. What a supreme felicity to the author (only he is no traveller) on the Ganges or Hydaspes (Indian streams) to meet a smutty Gentoo reader to burst with laughing at the tale of Bo-Bo! for doubtless it hath been translated into all the dialects of the East. I grieve the less that Europe should want it. I cannot gather from your letter whether you are aware that a second series of the Essays is published by Moxon, in Dover-street, Piccadilly, called 'The Last Essays of Elia,' and, I am told, is not inferior to the former. Shall I order a copy for you, and will you accept it? Shall I *lend* you, at the same time, my sole copy of the former volume (oh! return it) for a month or two? In return, you shall favour me with the loan of one of those Norfolk grunters that you laud so highly; I promise not to keep it above a day. What a funny name Bungay is! I never dreamed of a correspondent thence. I used to think of it as some Utopian town or borough in Gotham land. I now believe in its existence as part of merry England.

[Here some lines are scratched out.]

The part I have scratched out is the best of the letter. Let me have your commands.

CH. LAMB *alias* ELIA."

A few days after this letter was written an accident befell Mr. Lamb, which seemed trifling at first, but which terminated in a fatal issue. In taking his daily morning walk on the London Road as far as the inn where John Gilpin's ride is pictured, he stumbled against a stone, fell, and slightly injured his face. The wounds seemed healing, when erysipelas in the head came on, and he sunk beneath the disease, happily without pain. On Friday evening Mr. Ryle, of the India House, who had been appointed co-executor with me of his will some years before, called on me, and informed me that he was in danger. I went over to Edmonton on the following morning, and found him very weak, and nearly insensible to things passing around him. Now and then a few words were audible, from which it seemed that his mind, in its feebleness, was intent on kind and hospitable thoughts. His last correspondent, Mr. Childs, had sent a present of a turkey instead of the suggested pig; and the broken sentences which

could be heard were of some meeting of friends to partake of it. I do not think he knew me; and, having vainly tried to engage his attention, I left him, not believing his death so near at hand. In less than an hour afterward his voice gradually grew fainter, as he still murmured the names of Moxon, Procter, and some other old friends, and he sank into death as placidly as into sleep. On the following Saturday his remains were laid in a deep grave in Edmonton churchyard, made in a spot which, about a fortnight before, he had pointed out to his sister, on an afternoon wintry walk, as the place where he wished to be buried.

So died, in the sixtieth year of his age, one of the most remarkable and amiable men who have ever lived. Few of his numerous friends were aware of his illness before they heard of his death; and, until that illness seized him, he had appeared so little changed by time, so likely to continue for several years, and he was so intimately associated with everyday engagements and feelings, that the news was as strange as it was mournful. When the first sad surprise was over, several of his friends strove to do justice to their own recollections of him; and articles upon his character and writings, all written out of the heart, appeared from Mr. Procter in the "Athenæum," from Mr. Forster in the "New Monthly Magazine," from Mr. Patmore in the "Court Magazine," and from Mr. Moxon in Leigh Hunt's London Journal, besides others whose authors are unknown to me; and subsequently many affectionate allusions from pens which his own had inspired, have been gleaned out in various passages of "Blackwood," "Fraser," "Tait," and almost every periodical work of reputation. The "Recollections of Coleridge," by Mr. Allsop, also breathed the spirit of admiration for his elevated genius, which the author—one whom Lamb held in the highest esteem for himself, and for his devotion to Coleridge—had for years expressed both in his words and in deeds. But it is not possible for the subtilest characteristic power, even when animated by the warmest personal regard, to give to those who never had the privilege of his companionship an idea of what Lamb was. There was an apparent contradiction in him, which seemed an inconsistency between thoughts closely associated, and which was, in reality, nothing but the contradiction of his genius and his fortune, fantastically exhibiting itself in different aspects, which close intimacy could alone appreciate. He would startle you with the finest perception of truth, separating, by a phrase, the real from a tissue of conventional falsehoods, and the next moment, by some whimsical invention, make you "doubt truth to be a liar." He would touch

the inmost pulse of profound affection, and then break off in some jest, which would seem profane "to ears polite," bu carry as profound a meaning to those who had the right key as his most pathetic suggestions; and where he loved and doted most, he would vent the overflowing of his feeling in words that looked like rudeness. He touches on this strange resource of love in his "Farewell to Tobacco," in a passage which may explain some startling freedoms with those he himself loved most dearly.

"Irony all, and feign'd abuse,
Such as perplex'd lovers use.
At a need, when in despair,
To paint forth their fairest fair;
Or in part but to express
That exceeding comeliness,
Which their fancies doth so strike
They borrow language of dislike;
And, instead of 'dearest miss,'
Jewel, honey, sweetheart, bliss,
And those forms of old admiring,
Call her cockatrice and siren,
Basilisk, and all that's evil,
Witch, hyena, mermaid, devil,
Ethiop, wench, and blackamoor,
Monkey, ape, and twenty more,
Friendly traitress, loving foe.
Not that she is truly so,
But no other way they know
A contentment to express
Borders so upon excess,
That they do not rightly wot
Whether it be pain or not."

Thus, in the very excess of affection to his sister, whom he loved above all else on earth, he would sometimes address to her some words of seeming reproach, yet so tinged with a humorous irony that none but an entire stranger could mistake his drift. His anxiety for her health, even in his most convivial moments, was unceasing. If, in company, he perceived she looked languid, he would repeatedly ask her, "Mary, does your head ache?" "Don't you feel unwell?" and would be satisfied by none of her gentle assurances that his fears were groundless. He was always afraid of her sensibilities being too deeply engaged; and if in her presence any painful accident or history was discussed, he would turn the conversation with some desperate joke. Miss Beetham, the author of the "Lay of Marie," which Lamb esteemed one of the most graceful and truly feminine works in a literature rich in female genius, who has reminded me of the trait in some recollections of Lamb with which she has furnished me, relates that once when she was speaking to Miss Lamb of Charles, and in her earnestness Miss Lamb had laid her hand kindly

on the eulogist's shoulder, he came up hastily and interrupted them, saying, "Come, come, we must not talk sentimentally," and took up the conversation in his gayest strain.

Many of Lamb's witty and curious sayings have been repeated since his death, which are worthy to be held in undying remembrance; but they give no idea of the general tenour of his conversation, which was far more singular and delightful in the traits, which could never be recalled, than in the epigrammatic turns which it is possible to quote. It was fretted into perpetual eddies of verbal felicity and happy thought, with little tranquil intervals reflecting images of exceeding elegance and grace. He sometimes poured out puns in startling succession; sometimes curiously contrived a train of sentences to introduce the catastrophe of a pun, which, in that case, was often startling from its own demerit. At Mr. Carey's one day he introduced and kept up an elaborate dissertation on the various uses and abuses of the word *nice;* and, when its variations were exhausted, showed what he had been driving at by exclaiming, "Well! now we have held a Council of Nice." "A pun," said he, in a letter to Coleridge, in which he eulogized the Odes and Addresses of his friends Hood and Reynolds, "is a thing of too much consequence to be thrown in as a makeweight. You shall read one of the Addresses twice over and miss the puns, and it shall be quite as good, or better, than when you discover them. A pun is a noble thing *per se*. Oh, never bring it in as an accessary! A pun is a sole digest of reflection (vide my 'Aids' to that awaking from a savage state); it is entire; it fills the mind; it is as perfect as a sonnet; better. It limps ashamed in the train and retinue of humour. It knows it should have an establishment of its own. The one, for instance, I made the other day; I forget which it was." Indeed, Lamb's choicest puns and humorous expressions could not be recollected. They were born of the evanescent feeling, and died with it; "one moment *bright*, then gone for ever." The shocks of pleasurable surprise were so rapid in succession, and the thoughts suggested so new, that one destroyed the other, and left only the sense of delight behind. Frequently as I had the happiness of seeing him during twenty years, I can add nothing from my own store of recollection to those which have been collected by others, and those I almost hesitate to repeat, so vapid is their effect when printed compared to that which they produced when, stammered out, they gave to the moment its victory.*

* Miss Beetham has kindly supplied the following examples of his conversation:—A Miss Pate (when he heard of her, he asked if she was any rela

It cannot be denied or concealed that Lamb's excellences, moral and intellectual, were blended with a single frailty; so intimately associating itself with all that was most charming

tion to Mr. John *Head* of Ipswich) was at a party, and he said on hearing her name, "Miss Pate I hate." "You are the first person who ever told me so, however," said she. "Oh! I mean nothing by it. If it had been Miss Dove, I should have said, Miss Dove I love; or Miss Pike I like." About this time also I saw Mr. Hazlitt for the first time at their house, and was talking on metaphysical subjects with him. Mr. Lamb came up; but my companion was very eloquent, and I begged him not to interrupt us. He stood silent, and Mr. Dyer came to me. "I know," said he, "that Mr. Cristall is a very fine artist, but I should like to know in what his merit principally consists. Is it colouring, character, design, &c.? my eyes are so bad!" On which Mr Lamb began rhyming—

"Says Mr. Dyer to Mr. Dawe,
Pray how does Mr. Cristall draw?
Says Mr. Dawe to Mr. Dyer,
He draws as well as you'd desire."

A lady he was intimate with had dark eyes, and one evening people rather persecuted him to praise them. "You should now write a couplet in praise of her eyes." "Ay, do, Mr. Lamb," said she, "make an epigram about my eyes." He looked at her—

"Your eyes! your eyes!
Are both of a size!"

which was praise, but the least that could be accorded. Mrs. S—— recommended *honey* to him as a good thing for the eyes, and said her daughter had received much benefit from it. "I knew," said he, "she had sweet eyes, but had no idea before how they became so."

At my house once a person said something about his grandmother. "Was she a tall woman?" said Lamb. "I don't know; no. Why do you ask?" "Oh, mine was; she was a granny dear." He asked an absent lady's name who had rather sharp features. On hearing it was Elizabeth, or something of the kind, he said, "I should have thought, if it had been Mary, she might have been St. Mary Axe." Another, who was very much marked with the smallpox, he said, looked as if the devil had ridden roughshod over her face. I saw him talking to her afterward with great apparent interest, and noticed it, saying, "I thought he had not liked her." His reply was, "I like her internals very well." When I knew him first, I happened to sit next him at dinner, and he was running on about some lady who had died of love for him, saying, "he was very sorry," but we could not command such inclinations; making all the commonplace stuff said on such occasions appear very ridiculous, his sister laughingly interrupting him now and then by saying, "Why, she's alive now!" "Why, she's married, and has a large family," &c. He would not, however, allow it, and went on. With a very serious face, therefore, when he looked my way, I said, "And did she really die?" With a look of indignant astonishment at my simplicity, he said, "And do you think I should?" Not being able to suppress a smile, he saw what I had been about; and, without finishing his speech, turned away his head. The way in which he would imitate a person who had been detected in some petty theft was inimitable. He began once by saying he never had been in suspicious circumstances but once, and then he had his hand over a guinea that lay on a counter, but that he really did not know it was there, &c. My youngest sister, then a little girl, in her talk afterward, seemed to think he must have known it.

Mrs. H—— was sitting on a sofa one day between Mr. Montague and Mr. Lamb. The latter spoke to her, but all her attention was given to the other party. At last they ceased talking, and, turning round to Mr. Lamb, she asked what it was he had been saying. He replied, "Ask Mr. Montague, for it went in at one ear and out at another."

in the one and sweetest in the other, that, even if it were right to withdraw it wholly from notice, it would be impossible without it to do justice to his virtues. The eagerness with which he would quaff exciting liquors from an early period of life proved that to a physical peculiarity of constitution

One day, at the exhibition of the Royal Academy, I was sitting on a form, looking at the catalogue, and answering some young people about me who had none, or spared themselves the trouble of consulting it. There was a large picture of Prospero and Miranda; and I had just said, "It is by *Shee*;" when a voice near me said, "Would it not be more grammatical to say by *her*?" I looked, it was Mr. Lamb.

He went with a party down to my brother Charles's ship, in which the officers gave a ball to their friends. My brother hired a vessel to take us down to it, and some one of the company asked its name. On hearing it was the *Antelope*, Mr. Lamb cried out, "Don't name it; I have such a respect for my aunt, I cannot bear to think of her doing such a foolish action!"

I once sat with Mr. Lamb in the pit of the theatre when Mrs. Siddons gave one of her last performances. We had two vulgar and conceited women behind us, who went on explaining and commenting, to show their knowledge, in a most absurd manner. Mr. Lamb occasionally gave them a lift. When Malcom came on, he said, "*He* a king! why he is in petticoats!" One of them said to the other, "It's the dress of the country. Ignorant wretches!" *I* had, I believe, once led the discourse in company, by telling a story of a bad Arabian poet, who fell sick because he could get nobody to hear him recite: the physician grasped the cane and caned him. On this Mr. Lamb declaimed a great deal against the absurdity of reading one's own works aloud; that people were always tired instead of being pleased with it; and that he made a poem the other day, befitting the time (one of those of overwhelming darkness, such as ours in London sometimes are); and though he had not yet had time to transcribe it, and recollected it perfectly, he should never think of repeating it to other people. Everybody, of course, were entreating him to favour them by repeating it, assuring him they should like it very much; and *at length* he complied. "Oh my Gog! what a fog!" "A fine thing to make a fuss about!" said Miss M——; "why, I can make a second part extempore—I cannot see to kill a flea!"

A lady who had been visiting in the neighbourhood of Ipswich, on her return could talk of nothing but the beauty of the country and the merits of the people. Mr. Lamb remarked that "she was Suffolk-ated."

The following specimens of his conversation have been supplied by another friend.

A widow-friend of Lamb having opened a preparatory school for children at Camden Town, said to him, "I live so far from town I must have a sign, I think you call it, to show that I teach children." "Well," he replied, "you can have nothing better than '*The Murder of the Innocents.*'"

A gentleman who had lived some years in China mentioned that a formidable enemy to the Chinese would arise one day in a warlike piratical nation on the borders of China—*the Ladrones*. In the course of the evening the progress of musical science in China was spoken of, and the traveller, by way of illustrating his remarks, sung a Chinese love-song. Lamb listened very gravely to this dissonant performance, and at the end exclaimed, "*God prosper the Ladrones!*"

Coleridge one day said to him, "Charles, did you ever hear me *preach*?" "I never heard you do anything else," said Lamb.

Seeing a little boy heavily laden with groceries toiling up Highgate Hill one hot summer's day, Lamb offered to assist him; took his load; and carried it for him to the house where the child was to deliver it. On laying down his burden, Lamb requested the lady of the house to remonstrate with her grocer on the inhumanity of compelling such a little boy to carry such a load. The lady bristled up, and sharply replied, "I have nothing to do with such matters;" on which Lamb, altering his tone, irresistibly said, "I hope, ma'am you'll *give* me a drop of beer."

was to be ascribed, in the first instance, the strength of the temptation with which he was assailed. This kind of corporeal need; the struggles of deep thought to overcome the bashfulness and the impediment of speech which obstructed its utterance; the dull, heavy, irksome labours which hung heavy on his mornings, and dried up his spirits; and, still more, the sorrows which had environed him, and which prompted him to snatch a fearful joy; and the unbounded craving after sympathy with human feelings, conspired to disarm his power of resisting when the means of indulgence were actually before him. Great exaggerations have been prevalent on this subject, countenanced, no doubt, by the "Confessions" which, in the prodigality of his kindness, he contributed to his friend's collection of essays and authorities against the use of spirituous liquors; for, although he had rarely the power to overcome the temptation when presented, he made heroic sacrifices in flight. His final abandonment of tobacco, after many ineffectual attempts, was one of these—a princely sacrifice. He had loved smoking, "not wisely, but too well," for he had been content to use the coarsest varieties of the "great plant." When Dr. Parr—who took only the finest tobacco, used to half fill his pipe with salt, and smoked with a philosophic calmness—saw Lamb smoking the strongest preparation of the weed, puffing out smoke like some furious enchanter, he gently laid down his pipe, and asked him how he had acquired his power of smoking at such a rate. Lamb replied, "I toiled after it, sir, as some men toil after virtue." Partly to shun the temptations of society, and partly to preserve his sister's health, he fled from London, where his pleasures and his heart were, and buried himself in the solitude of the country, to him always dismal. He would even deny himself the gratification of meeting Wordsworth or Southey, or use it very sparingly during their visits to London, in order that the accompaniments of the table might not entice him to excess. And if sometimes, after miles of solitary communing with his own sad thoughts, the village inn did invite him to quaff a glass of sparkling ale; and if, when his retreat was lighted up with the presence of some old friend, he was unable to refrain from the small potion which was too much for his feeble frame, let not the stout-limbed and the happy exult over the consequence! Drinking with him, except so far as it cooled a feverish thirst, was not a sensual, but an intellectual pleasure; it lighted up his fading fancy, enriched his humour, and impelled the struggling thought or beautiful image into day; and, perhaps, by requiring for him some portion of that allowance which he extended to

all human frailities, endeared him the more to those who so often received, and were delighted to bestow it.

Lamb's indulgence to the failings of others could hardly, indeed, be termed allowance; the name of charity is too cold to suit it. He did not merely love his friends in spite of their errors, but he loved them errors and all; so near to him was everything human. He numbered among his associates men of all varieties of opinion—philosophical, religious, and political—and found something to like, not only in the men themselves, but in themselves as associated with their theories and their schemes. In the high and calm, but devious speculations of Godwin; in the fierce hatreds of Hazlitt; in the gentle and glorious mysticism of Coleridge; in the sturdy opposition of Thelwall to the government; in Leigh Hunt's softened and fancy-streaked patriotism; in the gallant toryism of Stoddart; he found traits which made the individuals more dear to him. When Leigh Hunt was imprisoned in Cold Bath Fields for a libel, Lamb was one of his most constant visiters —and when Thelwall was striving to bring the "Champion" into notice, Lamb was ready to assist him with his pen, and to fancy himself, for the time, a Jacobin.* In this large intellectual tolerance he resembled Professor Wilson, who, notwithstanding his own decided opinions, has a compass of mind large enough to embrace all others which have noble alliances

* The following little poem—quite out of Lamb's usual style—was written for that journal.

THE THREE GRAVES.

Close by the ever-burning brimstone beds,
Where Bedloe, Oates, and Judas hide their heads,
I saw great Satan, like a sexton stand,
With his intolerable spade in hand,
Digging three graves. Of coffin shape they were,
For those who, coffinless, must enter there,
With unbless'd rites. The shrouds were of that cloth
Which Clothe weaved in her blackest wrath;
The dismal tint oppress'd the eye that dwelt
Upon it long, like darkness to be felt.
The pillows to these baleful beds were toads,
Large, living, livid, melancholy loads,
Whose softness shock'd. Worms of all monstrous size
Crawl'd round; and one upcoil'd, which never dies,
A doleful bell, inculcating despair,
Was always ringing in the heavy air.
And all around the detestable pit
Strange headless ghosts and quarter'd forms did flit;
Rivers of blood from living traitors spilt,
By treachery stung from poverty to guilt.
I ask'd the fiend for whom those rites were meant;
"These graves," quoth he, "when life's brief oil is spent,
When the dark night comes, and they're sinking bedwards,
I mean for Castles, Oliver, and Edwards"

within its range.* But not only to opposite opinions and devious habits of thought was Lamb indulgent; he discovered "the soul of goodness in things evil" so vividly, that the surrounding evil disappeared from his mental vision. Nothing —no discovery of error or of crime—could divorce his sympathy from a man who had once engaged it. He saw in the spendthrift, the outcast, only the innocent companion of his schooldays or the joyous associate of his convivial hours, and he did not even make penitence or reform a condition of his regard. Perhaps he had less sympathy with philanthropic schemers for the improvement of the world than with any other class of men; but of these he numbered two of the greatest, Clarkson, the destroyer of the slave trade, and Basil Montague, the constant opponent of the judicial infliction of death; and the labours of neither have been in vain!

To those who were not intimately acquainted with Lamb, the strong disinclination to contemplate another state of being, which he sometimes expressed in his serious conversation, and which he has solemnly confessed in his "Newyear's Eve," might cast a doubt on feelings which were essentially pious. The same peculiarity of nature which attached him to the narrow and crowded streets, in preference to the mountain and the glen—which made him loath to leave even painful circumstances and unpleasant or ill-timed company; the desire to seize and grasp all that was nearest, bound him to earth, and prompted his sympathies to revolve within a narrow circle. Yet in that very power of adhesion to outward things might be discerned the strength of a spirit destined to live beyond them. Within the contracted sphere of his habits and desires he detected the subtilest essences of Christian kindliness, shed over it a light from heaven, and peopled it with divine fancies and

> "Thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
> That they were born for immortality."

Although he numbered among his associates freethinkers and skeptics, he had a great dislike to any profane handling of sacred subjects, and always discouraged polemical discussion. One evening, when Irving and Coleridge were in company, and a young gentleman had spoken slightingly of religion, Lamb remained silent; but, when the party broke

* Lamb only once met that remarkable person—who has, probably, more points of resemblance to him than any other living poet—and was quite charmed with him. They walked out from Enfield together, and strolled happily a long summer's day, not omitting, however, a call for a refreshing draught. Lamb called for a pot of ale or porter—half of which would have been his own usual allowance; and was delighted to hear the professor, on the appearence of the *foaming tankard*, say reproachfully to the waiter, "And *one for me.*"

up, he said to the youth who had thus annoyed his guests "Pray, did you come here in a hat, sir, or in a turban?"

The range of Lamb's reading was varied, but yet peculiar He rejoiced in all old English authors, but cared little for the moderns, except one or two; and those whom he loved as authors because they were his friends. Attached always to things of flesh and blood rather than to "the bare earth and mountains bare, and grass in the green field," he chiefly loved the great dramatists, whose beauties he supported, and sometimes heightened, in his suggestive criticisms. While he enjoyed Wordsworth's poetry, especially "The Excursion," with a love which grew upon him from his youth, he would repeat some of Pope's divine compliments or Dryden's lines, weighty with sterling sense or tremendous force of satire, with eyes trembling into tears. The comedies of Wycherley, and Congreve, and Farquhar, were not to him gross and sensual, but airy, delicate creations, framed out of coarse materials it might be, but evaporating in wit and grace, harmless effusions of the intellect and the fancy. The ponderous dulness of old controversialists, the dead weight of volumes of once fierce dispute, of which time had exhausted the venom, did not appal him. He liked the massive reading of the old Quaker records, the huge density of old schoolmen, better than the flippancy of modern criticism. If you spoke of Lord Byron, he would turn the subject by quoting the lines descriptive of his namesake in *Love's Labour's Lost*—"Oft have I heard of you, my Lord Byron," &c.—for he could find nothing to revere or love in poetry of that extraordinary but most uncomfortable poet, except the apostrophe to Parnassus, in which he exults in the sight of the real mountain instead of the mere poetic image. All the Laras, and Giaours, and Childe Harolds were to him but "unreal mockeries"—the phantasms of a feverish dream—forms which did not appeal to the sympathies of mankind, and never can find root among them. Shelley's poetry, too, was icy cold to him; except one or two of the minor poems, in which he could not help admiring the exquisite beauty of the expression; and the "Cenci," in which, notwithstanding the painful nature of the subject, there is a warmth and passion, and a correspondent simplicity of diction, which prove how mighty a poet the author would have become had he lived long enough for his feelings to have free discourse with his creative power. Responding only to the touch of human affection, he could not bear poetry which, instead of making the whole world kin, renders our own passions, and frailties, and virtues strange to us; presents them at distance in splendid masquerade; exalts them into new and

unauthorized mythology, and crystallizes all our freshest loves and mantling joys into clusters of radiant fancies. He made some amends for his indifference to Shelley by his admiration of Mrs. Shelley's "Frankenstein," which he thought the most extraordinary realization of the idea of a being out of nature which had ever been effected. For the Scotch novels he cared very little, not caring to be puzzled with new plots, and preferring to read Fielding, and Smollett, and Richardson, whose stories were familiar, over and over again, to being worried with the task of threading the maze of fresh adventure. But the good-naturedness of Sir Walter to all his contemporaries won his admiration, and he heartily rejoiced in the greatness of his fame and the rich rewards showered upon him, and desired they might accumulate for the glory of literature and the triumph of kindness. He was never introduced to Sir Walter; but he used to speak with gratitude and pleasure of the circumstances under which he saw him once in Fleet-street. A man, in the dress of a mechanic, stopped him just at Inner Temple-gate, and said, touching his hat, "I beg your pardon, sir, but perhaps you would like to see Sir Walter Scott; that is he just crossing the road;" and Lamb stammered out his hearty thanks to his truly humane informer.

Of his own writings it is now superfluous to speak; for, after having encountered long derision and neglect, they have taken their place among the classics of his language. They stand alone, at once singular and delightful. They are all carefully elaborated; yet never were works written in higher defiance to the conventional pomp of style. A sly hit, a happy pun, a humorous combination, lets the light into the intricacies of the subject, and supplies the place of ponderous sentences. As his serious conversation was his best, so his serious writing is far preferable to his fantastical humours—cheering as they are, and suggestive ever as they are of high and invigorating thoughts. Seeking his materials, for the most part, in the common paths of life—often in the humblest—he gives an importance to everything, and sheds a grace over all. The spirit of gentility seems to breathe around all his persons; he detects the venerable and the excellent in the narrowest circumstances and humblest conditions, with the same subtilty which reveals the hidden soul of the greatest works of genius. In all things he is most human. Of all modern writers, his works are most immediately directed to give us heart-ease and to make us happy.

Among the felicities of Lamb's checkered life, that which he esteemed most was his intimate friendship with some of

the greatest of our poets—Coleridge, Southey, and W worth; the last and greatest of whom has paid a trib his memory which may fitly close this sketch of his lif

"To a good man of most dear memory
This stone is sacred. Here he lies apart
From that great city where he first drew breath,
Was reared and taught; and humbly earned his bread,
To the strict labours of the merchant's desk
By duty chained. Not seldom did those tasks
Teaze, and the thought of time so spent depress
His spirit, but the recompense was high;
Firm Independence, Bounty's rightful sire;
Affections, warm as sunshine, free as air;
And when the precious hours of leisure came,
Knowledge and wisdom, gained from converse sweet
With books, or while he ranged the crowded streets
With a keen eye and overflowing heart:
So genius triumphed over seeming wrong,
And poured out truth in works by thoughtful love
Inspired—works potent over smiles and tears.
And as round mountain-tops the lightning plays,
Thus innocently sported, breaking forth
As from a cloud of some grave sympathy,
Humour, and wild instinctive wit, and all
The vivid flashes of his spoken words.
From the most gentle creature nursed in fields
Had been derived the name he bore—a name,
Wherever Christian altars have been raised,
Hallowed to meekness and to innocence;
And if in him meekness at times gave way,
Provoked out of herself by troubles strange,
Many and strange, that hung about his life;
Still, at the centre of his being, lodged
A soul by resignation sanctified:
And if too often, self-reproached, he felt
That innocence belongs not to our kind,
A power that never ceased to abide in him,
Charity, mid the multitude of sins
That she can cover, left not his exposed
To an unforgiving judgment from just Heaven.
Oh, he was good, if e'er a good man lived!
* * * * *
From a reflecting mind and sorrowing heart
Those simple lines flowed with an earnest wish,
Though but a doubting hope, that they might serve
Fitly to guard the precious dust of him
Whose virtues called them forth. That aim is missed;
For much that truth most urgently required
Had from a faltering pen been asked in vain:
Yet, haply, on the printed page received,
The imperfect record, there, may stand unblamed
As long as verse of mine shall breathe the air
Of memory, or see the light of love.
Thou wert a scorner of the fields, my friend!
But more in show than truth! and from the fields
And from the mountains, to thy rural grave
Transported, my soothed spirit hovers o'er
Its green untrodden turf and blowing flowers;
And, taking up a voice, shall speak (though still
Awed by the theme's peculiar sanctity,
Which words less free presumed not even to touch)
Of that fraternal love, whose heaven-lit lamp

From infancy, through manhood, to the last
Of threescore years, and to thy latest hour,
Burnt on with ever-strengthening light, enshrined
Within thy bosom.
'Wonderful' hath been
The love established between man and man,
'Passing the love of women;' and between
Man and his helpmate in fast wedlock joined
Through God, is raised a spirit and soul of love,
Without whose blissful influence Paradise
Had been no Paradise; and earth were now
A waste, where creatures bearing human form,
Direst of savage beasts, would roam in fear,
Joyless and comfortless. Our days glide on;
And let him grieve who cannot choose but grieve
That he hath been an Elm without his Vine,
And her bright dower of clustering charities,
That, round his trunk and branches, might have clung
Enriching and adorning. Unto thee
Not so enriched, not so adorned, to thee
Was given (say rather thou of later birth
Wert given to her) a sister—'tis a word
Timidly uttered, for she *lives*, the meek,
The self-restraining, and the ever-kind;
In whom thy reason and intelligent heart
Found—for all interests, hopes, and tender cares,
All softening, humanizing, hallowing powers,
Whether withheld, or for her sake unsought—
More than sufficient recompense!
Her love
(What weakness prompts the voice to tell it here?)
Was as the love of mothers; and when years,
Lifting the boy to man's estate, had called
The long-protected to assume the part
Of a protector, the first filial tie
Was undissolved; and, in or out of sight,
Remained imperishably interwoven
With life itself. Thus, mid a shifting world,
Did they together testify of time
And seasons' difference—a double tree
With two collateral stems sprung from one root;
Such were they—such through life they *might* have been
In union, in partition only such;
Otherwise wrought the will of the Most High;
Yet, through all visitations and all trials,
Still they were faithful; like two vessels launched
From the same beach one ocean to explore
With mutual help, and sailing—to their league
True, as inexorable winds, or bars
Floating or fixed of polar ice, allow.

But turn we rather, let my spirit turn
With thine, oh silent and invisible Friend!
To those dear intervals, nor rare nor brief,
When reunited, and by choice withdrawn
From miscellaneous converse, ye were taught
That the remembrance of foregone distress,
And the worst fear of future ill (which oft
Doth hang around it, as a sickly child
Upon its mother), may be both alike
Disarmed of power to unsettle present good
So prized, and things inward and outward held
In such an even balance, that the heart

Acknowledges God's grace, his mercy feels,
And in its depth of gratitude is still.
Oh gift divine of quiet sequestration!
The hermit, exercised in prayer and praise,
And feeding daily on the hope of heaven,
Is happy in his vow, and fondly cleaves
To life-long singleness; but happier far
Was, to your souls, and, to the thoughts of others,
A thousand times more beautiful appeared,
Your *dual* loneliness. The sacred tie
Is broken; yet why grieve? for Time but holds
His moiety in trust, till Joy shall lead
To the bless'd world where parting is unknown."

END OF LAMB'S LETTERS AND LIFE.

FINAL MEMORIALS

OF

CHARLES LAMB,

CONSISTING

CHIEFLY OF HIS LETTERS NOT BEFORE PUBLISHED, WITH SKETCHES OF SOME OF HIS COMPANIONS.

BY

SIR THOMAS NOON TALFOURD, D.C.L.,

ONE OF HIS EXECUTORS.

TO

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, ESQ., D.C.L.,

POET LAUREATE,

THESE FINAL MEMORIALS

OF ONE WHO CHERISHED HIS FRIENDSHIP AS A COMFORT AMIDST GRIEFS AND A GLORY AMIDST DEPRESSIONS, ARE, WITH AFFECTION AND RESPECT,

INSCRIBED

BY ONE WHOSE PRIDE IS TO HAVE BEEN IN OLD TIME HIS EARNEST ADMIRER, AND ONE OF WHOSE FONDEST WISHES IS THAT HE MAY BE LONG SPARED TO ENJOY FAME RARELY ACCORDED TO THE LIVING.

PREFACE.

NEARLY twelve years have elapsed since the Letters of Charles Lamb, accompanied by such slight sketch of his life as might link them together, and explain the circumstances to which they refer, were given to the world. In the preface to that work reference was made to letters yet remaining unpublished, and to a period when a more complete estimate might be formed of the singular and delightful character of the writer than was there presented. That period has arrived. Several of his friends, who might possibly have felt a moment's pain at the publication of some of those effusions of kindness in which they are sportively mentioned, have been removed by death; and the dismissal of the last, and to him the dearest of all, his sister, while it has brought to her the repose she sighed for ever since she lost him, has released his biographer from a difficulty which has hitherto prevented a due appreciation of some of his noblest qualities. Her most lamentable, but most innocent agency in the event which consigned her for life to his protection, forbade the introduction of any letter, or allusion to any incident, which might ever, in the long and dismal twilight of consciousness which she endured, shock her by the recurrence of long past and terrible sorrows; and the same consideration for her induced the suppression of every passage which referred to the malady with which she was through life at intervals afflicted. Although her death had removed the objection to a reference to her intermittent suffering, it still left a momentous question, whether even then, when no relative remained to be affected by the disclosure, it would be right to unveil the dreadful calamity which marked one of its earliest visitations, and which, though known to most of those who were intimate with the surviving sufferers, had never

been publicly associated with their history. When, however, I reflected that the truth, while in no wise affecting the gentle excellence of one of them, casts new and solemn lights on the character of the other—that, while his frailties have received an ample share of that indulgence which he extended to all human weaknesses, their chief exciting cause has been hidden—that his moral strength and the extent of his self sacrifice have been hitherto unknown to the world, I felt that to develop all which is essential to the just appreciation of his rare excellence was due both to him and to the public. While I still hesitated as to the extent of disclosure needful for this purpose, my lingering doubts were removed by the appearance of a full statement of the melancholy event, with all the details capable of being collected from the newspapers of the time, in the "British Quarterly Review," and the diffusion of the passage, extracted thence, through several other journals. After this publication, no doubt could remain as to the propriety of publishing the letters of Lamb on this event, eminently exalting the characters of himself and his sister, and enabling the reader to judge of the sacrifice which followed it.

I have also availed myself of the opportunity of introducing some letters, the objection to publishing which has been obviated by the same great healer, Time, and of adding others which I deemed too trivial for the public eye, when the whole wealth of his letters lay before me, collected by Mr. Moxon from the distinguished correspondents of Lamb, who kindly responded to his request for permission to make the public sharers in their choice epistolary treasures. The appreciation which the letters already published, both in this country and in America—perhaps even more remarkable in America than in England—have attained, and the interest which the lightest fragments of Lamb's correspondence, which have accidentally appeared in other quarters, have excited, convince me that some letters which I withheld, as doubting their worthiness of the public eye, will not now be unwelcome. There is, indeed, scarcely a note—a *notelet* (as he used to call his very little letters)—Lamb ever wrote which has not

some tinge of that quaint sweetness, some hint of that peculiar union of kindness and whim, which distinguish him from all other poets and humorists. I do not think the reader will complain that—with some very slight exceptions, which personal considerations still render necessary—I have made him a partaker of *all* the epistolary treasures which the generosity of Lamb's correspondents placed at Mr. Moxon's disposal.

When I first considered the materials of this work, I purposed to combine them with a new edition of the former volumes; but the consideration that such a course would be unjust to the possessors of those volumes induced me to present them to the public in a separate form. In accomplishing that object, I have felt the difficulty of connecting the letters so as to render their attendant circumstances intelligible, without falling into repetition of passages in the previous biography. My attempt has been to make these volumes subsidiary to the former, and yet complete in themselves, but I fear its imperfection will require much indulgence from the reader. The italics and capitals used in printing the letters are always those of the writer, and the little passages sometimes prefixed to letters have been printed as in the originals.

In venturing to introduce some notices of Lamb's deceased companions, I have been impelled partly by a desire to explain any allusion in the letters which might be misunderstood by those who are not familiar with the fine vagaries of Lamb's affection, and partly by the hope of giving some faint notion of the entire circle with which Lamb is associated in the recollection of a few survivors.

T. N. T.

London, July, 1848.

FINAL MEMORIALS

OF

CHARLES LAMB.

CHAPTER I.

Letters of Lamb to Coleridge, in the Spring and Summer of 1796.

In the year 1795, Charles Lamb resided with his father, mother, and sister, in lodgings at No. 7, Little Queen-street, Holborn. The father was rapidly sinking into dotage; the mother suffered under an infirmity which deprived her of the use of her limbs; and the sister not only undertook the office of daily and nightly attendance on her mother, but sought to add by needle-work to their slender resources. Their income then consisted of an annuity which Mr. Lamb the elder derived from the old Bencher, Mr. Salt, whom he had faithfully served for many years; Charles's salary, which, being that of a clerk of three years' standing in the India House, could have been but scanty; and a small payment made for board by an old maiden aunt, who resided with them. In this year Lamb, being just twenty years of age, began to write verses—partly incited by the example of his old friend, Coleridge, whom he regarded with as much reverence as affection, and partly inspired by an attachment to a young lady residing in the neighbourhood of Islington, who is commemorated in his early verses as "the fair-haired maid." How his love prospered we cannot ascertain; but we know how nobly that love, and all hope of the earthly blessings attendant on such an affection, were resigned on the catastrophe which darkened the following year. In the meantime, his youth was lonely—rendered the more so by the recollection of the society of Coleridge, who had just left London—of Coleridge in the first bloom of life and genius, unshaded by the mysticism which it afterward glorified—full of boundless ambition, love, and hope! There was a tendency to insanity in his family, which had been more than once developed in his sister;

and it was no matter of surprise that in the dreariness of his solitude it fell upon him; and that, at the close of the year, he was subjected for a few weeks to the restraint of the insane. The wonder is that, amidst all the difficulties, the sorrows, and the excitements of his succeeding forty years, it never recurred. Perhaps the true cause of this remarkable exemption—an exemption the more remarkable when his afflictions are considered in association with one single frailty—will be found in the sudden claim made on his moral and intellectual nature by a terrible exigency, and by his generous answer to that claim; so that a life of self-sacrifice was rewarded by the preservation of unclouded reason.

The following letter to Coleridge, then residing at Bristol, which is undated, but which is proved by circumstances to have been written in the spring of 1796, and which is probably the earliest of Lamb's letters which have been preserved, contains his own account of this seizure. Allusion to the same event will be perceived in two letters of the same year, after which no reference to it appears in his correspondence, nor can any be remembered in his conversations with his dearest friends.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"1796.

'Dear C——, make yourself perfectly easy about May. I paid his bill when I sent your clothes. I was flush of money, and am so still to all the purposes of a single life; so give yourself no further concern about it. The money would be superfluous to me if I had it.

"When Southey becomes as modest as his predecessor Milton, and publishes his Epics in duodecimo, I will read 'em; a guinea a book is somewhat exorbitant, nor have I the opportunity of borrowing the work. The extracts from it in the Monthly Reviews, and the short passages in your Watchman, seem to me much superior to anything in his partnership account with Lovell. Your poems I shall procure forthwith. There were noble lines in what you inserted in one of your numbers, from 'Religious Musings;' but I thought them elaborate. I am somewhat glad you have given up that paper; it must have been dry, unprofitable, and of dissonant mood to your disposition. I wish you success in all your undertakings, and am glad to hear you are employed about the 'Evidences of Religion.' There is need of multiplying such books a hundredfold in this

philosophical age, to *prevent* converts to atheism, for they seem too tough disputants to meddle with afterwards.

"Le Grice is gone to make puns in Cornwall. He has got a tutorship to a young boy living with his mother, a widow-lady. He will, of course, initiate him quickly in 'whatsoever things are lovely, honourable, and of good report.' Coleridge! I know not what suffering scenes you have gone through at Bristol. My life has been somewhat diversified of late. The six weeks that finished last year and began this, your very humble servant spent very agreeably in a madhouse, at Hoxton. I am got somewhat rational now, and don't bite any one. But mad I was! And many a vagary my imagination played with me, enough to make a volume, if all were told. My sonnets I have extended to the number of nine since I saw you, and will some day communicate to you. I am beginning a poem in blank verse, which, if I finish, I publish White is on the eve of publishing (he took the hint from Vortigern) 'Original letters of Falstaff, Shallow,' &c., a copy you shall have when it comes out. They are without exception the best imitations I ever saw. Coleridge! it may convince you of my regards for you when I tell you my head ran on you in my madness, as much almost as on another person, who I am inclined to think was the more immediate cause of my temporary frenzy.

"The sonnet I send you has small merit as poetry; but you will be curious to read it when I tell you it was written in my prison-house in one of my lucid intervals.

TO MY SISTER.

"If from my lips some angry accents fell,
Peevish complaint, or harsh reproof unkind,
'Twas but the error of a sickly mind
And troubled thoughts, clouding the purer well,
And waters clear, of Reason; and for me
Let this my verse the poor atonement be—
My verse, which thou to praise wert e'er inclined
Too highly, and with partial eye to see
No blemish. Thou to me didst ever show
Kindest affection; and wouldst oft-times lend
An ear to the desponding love-sick lay;
Weeping my sorrows with me, who repay
But ill the mighty debt of love I owe,
Mary, to thee, my sister and my friend.

"With these lines, and with that sister's kindest remembrances to C——, I conclude.

"Yours sincerely, LAMB.

"Your 'Conciones ad Populum' are the most eloquent politics that ever came in my way.

"Write when convenient—not as a task, for here is nothing in this letter to answer.

"We cannot send our remembrances to Mrs. C., not having seen her, but believe me our best good wishes attend you both.

"My civic and poetic compliments to Southey if at Bristol;—why, he is a very Leviathan of Bards—the small minnow, I!"

In the spring of this year, Coleridge proposed the association of those first efforts of the young clerk in the India House, which he had prompted and praised, with his own, in a new edition of his Poems, to which Mr. Charles Lloyd also proposed to contribute. The following letter comprises Sonnets transmitted to Coleridge for this purpose, accompanied by remarks so characteristic as to induce the hope that the reader will forgive the introduction of these small gems of verse which were published in due course, for the sake of the original setting.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"1796.

"I am in such violent pain with the headache, that I am fit for nothing but transcribing, scarce for that. When I get your poems, and the 'Joan of Arc,' I will exercise my presumption in giving you my opinion of 'em. The mail does not come in before to-morrow (Wednesday) morning. The following Sonnet was composed during a walk down into Hertfordshire early in last summer:—

"The Lord of Light shakes off his drowsyhed.*
Fresh from his couch up springs the lusty sun
And girds himself his mighty race to run;
Meantime, by truant love of rambling led
I turn my back on thy detested walls,
Proud city, and thy sons I leave behind
A selfish, sordid, money-getting kind,
Who shut their ears when holy Freedom calls.
I pass not thee so lightly, humble spire,
That mindest me of many a pleasure gone,
Of merriest days of Love and Islington,
Kindling anew the flames of past desire;
And I shall muse on thee, slow journeying on,
To the green plains of pleasant Hertfordshire.

"The last line is a copy of Bowles's, 'To the green hamlet in the peaceful plain.' Your ears are not so very fas-

* "Drowsyhed" I have met with, I think, in Spenser. 'Tis an old thing, but it rhymes with led, and rhyming covers a multitude of licences.—C. Lamb's Manuscripts.

tidious; many people would not like words so prosaic and familiar in a Sonnet as Islington and Hertfordshire. The next was written within a day or two of the last, on revisiting a spot where the scene was laid of my first Sonnet 'that mocked my step with many a lonely glade.'

"When last I roved these winding wood-walks green,
Green winding walks, and shady pathways sweet
Oft-times would Anna seek the silent scene,
Shrouding her beauties in the lone retreat.
No more I hear her footsteps in the shade;
Her image only in these pleasant ways
Meets me self-wandering, where in happier days
I held free converse with my fair haired maid.
I passed the little cottage which she loved,
The cottage which did once my all contain;
It spake of days that ne'er must come again;
Spake to my heart, and much my heart was moved.
Now 'Fair befal thee, gentle maid,' said I;
And from the cottage turned me with a sigh.

"The next retains a few lines from a Sonnet of mine which you once remarked had no 'body of thought' in it. I agree with you, but have preserved a part of it, and it runs thus. I flatter myself you will like it:—

"A timid grace sits trembling in her eye,
As loth to meet the rudeness of men's sight;
Yet shedding a delicious lunar light,
That steeps in kind oblivious ecstacy
The care-crazed mind, like some still melody:
Speaking most plain the thoughts which do possess
Her gentle sprite, peace and meek quietness,
And innocent loves,* and maiden purity:
A look whereof might heal the cruel smart
Of changed friends; or Fortune's wrongs unkind;
Might to sweet deeds of mercy move the heart
Of him, who hates his brethren of mankind:
Turned are those beams from me, who fondly yet
Past joys, vain loves, and buried hopes regret.

"The next and last I value most of all. 'Twas composed close upon the heels of the last, in that very wood I had in mind when I wrote—'Methinks how dainty sweet.'

"We were two pretty babes, the youngest she,
The youngest, and the loveliest far, I ween,
And Innocence her name. The time has been
We two did love each other's company;
Time was, we two had wept to have been apart:
But when, with show of seeming good beguil'd,
I left the garb and manners of a child,
And my first love for man's society,
Defiling with the world my virgin heart—
My loved companion dropt a tear, and fled,
And hid in deepest shades her awful head.
Beloved! who can tell me where thou art—

* Cowley uses this phrase with a somewhat different meaning. I meant, loves of relatives, friends, &c.—C. Lamb's Manuscripts.

In what delicious Eden to be found—
That I may seek thee the wide world around?

"Since writing it, I have found in a poem by Hamilton of Bangor, these two lines to 'Happiness.'

Nun, sober and devout, where art thou fled
To hide in shades thy meek contented head?

Lines eminently beautiful; but I do not remember having read them previously, for the credit of my tenth and eleventh lines. Parnell has two lines (which probably suggested the above) to 'Contentment.'

Whither, ah! whither art thou fled
To hide thy meek contented* head?

"Cowley's exquisite 'Elegy on the death of his friend Harvey,' suggested the phrase of 'we two.'

Was there a tree that did not know
The love betwixt us two?

"So much for acknowledged plagiarisms, the confession of which I know not whether it has more of vanity or modesty in it. As to my blank verse, I am so dismally slow and sterile of ideas (I speak from my heart) that I much question if it will ever come to any issue. I have hitherto only hammered out a few independent, unconnected snatches, not in a capacity to be sent. I am very ill, and will rest till I have read your poems, for which I am very thankful. I have one more favour to beg of you, that you never mention Mr. May's affair in any sort, much less *think* of repaying. Are we not flocci-nauci-what-d'ye-call-'em-ists? We have just learned that my poor brother has had a sad accident, a large stone blown down by yesterday's high wind has bruised his leg in a most shocking manner; he is under the care of Cruikshanks. Coleridge! there are 10,000 objections against my paying you a visit at Bristol; it cannot be else; but in this world 'tis better not to think too much of pleasant possibles, that we may not be out of humour with present insipids. Should any thing bring you to London, you will recollect No. 7, Little Queen Street, Holborn.

"I shall be too ill to call on Wordsworth myself, but will take care to transmit him his poem, when I have read it. I saw Le Grice the day before his departure, and mentioned incidentally his 'teaching the young idea how to shoot.' Knowing him and the probability there is of people having a propensity to pun in his company, you will not wonder

* An odd epithet for Contentment in a poet so poetical as Parnell.—C. Lamb's Manuscripts.

that we both stumbled on the same pun at once, he eagerly anticipating me,—'he would teach him to shoot!' Poor Le Grice! if wit alone could entitle a man to respect, &c., he has written a very witty little pamphlet lately, satirical upon college declamations. When I send White's book, I will add that. I am sorry there should be any difference between you and Southey. 'Between you two there should be peace,' tho' I must say I have borne him no good will since he spirited you away from among us. What is become of Moschus? You sported some of his sublimities, I see, in your Watchman. Very decent things. So much for to-night from your afflicted, headachey, sore-throatey, humble servant, C. LAMB.

"*Tuesday night.*—Of your Watchman, the Review of Burke was the best prose. I augured great things from the first number. There is some exquisite poetry interspersed. I have re-read the extract from the 'Religious Musings,' and retract whatever invidious there was in my censure of it as elaborate. There are times when one is not in a disposition thoroughly to relish good writing. I have re-read it in a more favourable moment, and hesitate not to pronounce it sublime. If there be anything in it approaching to tumidity (which I meant not to infer; by elaborate I meant simply laboured), it is the gigantic hyperbole by which you describe the evils of existing society; 'snakes, lions, hyenas, and behemoths,' is carrying your resentment beyond bounds. The pictures of 'The Simoom,' of 'Frenzy and Ruin,' of 'The Whore of Babylon,' and 'The Cry of Foul Spirits disinherited of Earth,' and 'the strange beatitude' which the good man shall recognise in heaven, as well as the particularizing of the children of wretchedness (I have unconsciously included every part of it), form a variety of uniform excellence. I hunger and thirst to read the poem complete. That is a capital line in your sixth number.

"This dark, frieze-coated, hoarse, teeth-chattering month."

They are exactly such epithets as Burns would have stumbled on, whose poem on the ploughed-up daisy you seem to have had in mind. Your complaint that of your readers some thought there was too much, some too little original matter in your numbers, reminds me of poor dead Parsons in the 'Critic.' 'Too little incident! Give me leave to tell you, sir, there is too much incident.' I had like to have forgot thanking you for that exquisite little morsel,

the first Sclavonian Song. The expression in the second,—'more happy to be unhappy in hell;' is it not very quaint! Accept my thanks, in common with those of all who love good poetry, for 'The Braes of Yarrow.' I congratulate you on the enemies you must have made by your splendid invective against the barterers in human flesh and sinews. Coleridge! you will rejoice to hear that Cowper is recovered from his lunacy, and is employed on his translation of the Italian, &c., poems of Milton for an edition where Fuseli presides as designer. Coleridge! to an idler like myself, to write and receive letters are both very pleasant, but I wish not to break in upon your valuable time by expecting to hear very frequently from you. Reserve that obligation for your moments of lassitude, when you have nothing else to do; for your loco-restive and all your idle propensities, of course, have given way to the duties of providing for a family. The mail is come in, but no parcel; yet this is Tuesday. Farewell, then, till to-morrow, for a niche and a nook I must leave for criticisms. By the way, I hope you do not send your own only copy of Joan of Arc; I will in that case return it immediately.

"Your parcel *is* come; you have been *lavish* of your presents.

"Wordsworth's poem I have hurried through, not without delight. Poor Lovell! my heart almost accuses me for the light manner I spoke of him above, not dreaming of his death. My heart bleeds for your accumulated troubles; God send you through 'em with patience. I conjure you dream not that I will ever think of being repaid; the very word is galling to the ears. I have read all your 'Religious Musings' with uninterrupted feelings of profound admiration. You may safely rest your fame on it. The best remaining things are what I have before read, and they lose nothing by my recollection of your manner of reciting 'em, for I too bear in mind 'the voice, the look,' of absent friends, and can occasionally mimic their manner for the amusement of those who have seen 'em. Your impassioned manner of recitation I can recall at any time to mine own heart and to the ears of the bystanders. I rather wish you had left the monody on Chatterton concluding as it did abruptly. It had more of unity. The conclusion of your 'Religious Musings,' I fear, will entitle you to the reproof of your beloved woman, who wisely will not suffer your fancy to run riot, but bids you walk humbly with your God. The very last words, 'I exercise my young noviciate thought in min-

isteries of heart-stirring song,' though not now new to me, cannot be enough admired. To speak politely, they are a well-turned compliment to Poetry. I hasten to read 'Joan of Arc,' &c. I have read your lines at the beginning of second book: they are worthy of Milton; but in my mind yield to your 'Religious Musings.' I shall read the whole carefully, and in some future letter take the liberty to particularize my opinions of it. Of what is new to me among your poems next to the 'Musings,' that beginning 'My Pensive Sara' gave me most pleasure: the lines in it I just alluded to are most exquisite; they made my sister and self smile, as conveying a pleasing picture of Mrs. C. checking your wild wanderings, which we were so fond of hearing you indulge when among us. It has endeared us more than anything to your good lady, and your own self-reproof that follows delighted us. 'Tis a charming poem throughout (you have well remarked that charming, admirable, exquisite are the words expressive of feelings more than conveying of ideas, else I might plead very well want of room in my paper as excuse for generalizing). I want room to tell you how we are charmed with your verses in the manner of Spenser, &c. &c. &c. &c. &c. I am glad you resume the 'Watchman.' Change the name; leave out all articles of news, and whatever things are peculiar to newspapers, and confine yourself to ethics, verse, criticism—or rather do not confine yourself. Let your plan be as diffuse as the 'Spectator,' and I'll answer for it the work prospers. If I am vain enough to think I can be a contributor, rely on my inclinations. Coleridge! in reading your 'Religious Musings,' I felt a transient superiority over you. I *have* seen Priestley. I love to see his name repeated in your writings. I love and honour him almost profanely. You would be charmed with his *Sermons*, if you never read 'em. You have doubtless read his books illustrative of the doctrine of Necessity. Prefixed to a late work of his in answer to Paine, there is a preface giving an account of the man, and his services to men, written by Lindsey, his dearest friend, well worth your reading

"*Tuesday eve.*—Forgive my prolixity, which is yet too brief for all I could wish to say. God give you comfort, and all that are of your household! Our loves and best good wishes to Mrs. C. C. LAMB."

The parcel mentioned in the last letter brought the "Joan of Arc," and a request from Coleridge that Lamb would

freely criticise his poems with a view to their selection and correction for the contemplated volume. The reply is contained in the following letter, which, written on several days, begins at the extreme top of the first page, without any ceremony of introduction, and is comprised in three sides and a bit of foolscap.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"With 'Joan of Arc' I have been delighted, amazed; I had not presumed to expect anything of such excellence from Southey. Why, the poem is alone sufficient to redeem the character of the age we live in from the imputation of degenerating in Poetry, were there no such beings extant as Burns, and Bowles, Cowper, and ——; fill up the blank how you please; I say nothing. The subject is well chosen. It opens well. To become more particular, I will notice in their order a few passages that chiefly struck me on perusal. Page 26, 'Fierce and terrible Benevolence!' is a phrase full of grandeur and originality. The whole context made me feel *possessed*, even like Joan herself. Page 28, 'It is most horrible with the keen sword to gore the finely-fibred human frame,' and what follows, pleased me mightily. In the 2d Book, the first forty lines in particular are majestic and high-sounding. Indeed, the whole vision of the Palace of Ambition and what follows are supremely excellent. Your Simile of the Laplander, 'By Niemi's lake, or Balda Zhiok, or the mossy stone of Solfar-Kapper,'* will bear comparison with any in Milton for fulness of circumstance and lofty-pacedness of versification. Southey's similes, though many of 'em are capital, are all inferior. In one of his books, the simile of the oak in the storm occurs, I think, four times. To return; the light in which you view the heathen deities is accurate and beautiful. Southey's personifications in this book are so many fine and faultless pictures. I was much pleased with your manner of accounting for the reason why monarchs take delight in war. At the 447th line you have placed Prophets and Enthusiasts cheek by jowl, on too intimate a footing for the dignity of the former. Necessarian-like-speaking, it is correct. Page 98, 'Dead is the Douglas! cold thy warrior frame, illustrious Buchan,' &c., are of kindred excellence with Gray's 'Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,' &c. How famously the Maid baffles the Doctors, Seraphic and Irre-

* Lapland mountains. The verses referred to are published in Mr. Coleridge's Poem entitled "The Destiny of Nations: a Vision."

fragable, 'with all their trumpery!' Page 126, the procession, the appearances of the Maid, of the Bastard Son of Orleans and of Tremouille, are full of fire and fancy, and exquisite melody of versification. The personifications from line 303 to 309, in the heat of the battle, had better been omitted; they are not very striking, and only encumber. The converse which Joan and Conrade hold on the banks of the Loire is altogether beautiful. Page 313, the conjecture that in dreams 'all things are that seem,' is one of those conceits which the Poet delights to admit into his creed—a creed, by the way, more marvellous and mystic than ever Athanasius dreamed of. Page 315, I need only *mention* those lines ending with 'She saw a serpent gnawing at her heart!' They are good imitative lines, 'he toiled and toiled, of toil to reap no end, but endless toil and never-ending woe.' Page 347, Cruelty is such as Hogarth might have painted her. Page 361, all the passage about Love (where he seems to confound conjugal love with creating and preserving love) is very confused, and sickens me with a load of useless personifications; else that ninth Book is the finest in the volume—an exquisite combination of the ludicrous and the terrible: I have never read either, even in translation, but such I conceive to be the manner of Dante or Ariosto. The tenth Book is the most languid. On the whole, considering the celerity wherewith the poem was finished, I was astonished at the unfrequency of weak lines. I had expected to find it verbose. Joan, I think, does too little in battle; Dunois perhaps the same; Conrade too much. The anecdotes interspersed among the battles refresh the mind very agreeably, and I am delighted with the very many passages of simple pathos abounding throughout the poem, passages which the author 'Crazy Kate' might have written. Has not Master Southey spoke very slightingly, in his preface, and disparagingly of Cowper's Homer? What makes him reluctant to give Cowper his fame? And does not Southey use too often the expletives 'did' and 'does?' They have a good effect at times, but are too inconsiderable, or rather become blemishes, when they mark a style. On the whole, I expect Southey one day to rival Milton: I already deem him equal to Cowper, and superior to all living poets besides. What says Coleridge? The 'Monody on Henderson' is *immensely good*, the rest of that little volume is *readable, and above mediocrity*. I proceed to a more pleasant task; pleasant because the poems are yours; pleasant because you impose the task on me;

and pleasant, let me add, because it will confer a whimsical importance on me, to sit in judgment upon your rhymes. First, though, let me thank you again and again, in my own and my sister's name, for your invitations; nothing could give us more pleasure than to come, but (were there no other reasons) while my brother's leg is so bad it is out of the question. Poor fellow! he is very feverish and light-headed, but Cruikshanks has pronounced the symptoms favourable, and gives us every hope that there will be no need of amputation: God send not! We are necessarily confined with him all the afternoon and evening till very late, so that I am stealing a few minutes to write to you.

"Thank you for your frequent letters; you are the only correspondent, and, I might add, the only friend I have in the world. I go nowhere, and have no acquaintance. Slow of speech, and reserved of manners, no one seeks or cares for my society; and I am left alone. Allen calls only occasionally, as though it were a duty rather, and seldom stays ten minutes. Then judge how thankful I am for your letters! Do not, however, burthen yourself with the correspondence. I trouble you again so soon, only in obedience to your injunctions. Complaints apart, proceed we to our task. I am called away to tea; thence must wait upon my brother; so must delay till to-morrow. Farewell. *Wednesday.*

"*Thursday.*—I will first notice what is new to me. Thirteenth page; 'The thrilling tones that concentrate the soul' is a nervous line, and the six first lines of page 14 are very pretty; the twenty-first effusion a perfect thing. That in the manner of Spenser is very sweet, particularly at the close: the thirty-fifth effusion is most exquisite; that line in particular, 'And, tranquil, muse upon tranquillity.' It is the very reflex pleasure that distinguishes the tranquillity of a thinking being from that of a shepherd, a modern one I would be understood to mean, a Damætas, one that keeps other people's sheep. Certainly, Coleridge, your letter from Shurton Bars has less merit than most things in your volume; personally it may chime in best with your own feelings, and therefore you love it best. It has, however, great merit. In your fourth epistle that is an exquisite paragraph, and fancy-full, of 'A stream there is which rolls in lazy flow,' &c. &c. 'Murmurs sweet undersong 'mid jasmin bowers' is a sweet line, and so are the three next. The concluding simile is far-fetched—'tempest-honoured' is a quaintish phrase.

"Yours is a poetical family. I was much surprised and pleased to see the signature of Sara to that elegant composition, the fifth epistle. I dare not *criticise* the 'Religious Musings;' I like not to *select* any part, where all is excellent. I can only admire, and thank you for it in the name of a Christian, as well as a lover of good poetry; only let me ask, is not that thought and those words in Young, 'stands in the sun,'—or is it only such as Young, in one of his *better moments*, might have writ?—

> 'Believe thou, O my soul,
> Life is a vision shadowy of truth.
> And vice, and anguish, and the wormy grave,
> Shapes of a dream!'

I thank you for these lines in the name of a necessarian, and for what follows in next paragraph, in the name of a child of fancy. After all, you cannot, nor ever will, write any thing with which I shall be so delighted as what I have heard yourself repeat. You came to town, and I saw you at a time when your heart was yet bleeding with recent wounds. Like yourself, I was sore galled with disappointed hope; you had

> ——'many an holy lay
> That, mourning, soothed the mourner on his way.'

"I had ears of sympathy to drink them in, and they yet vibrate pleasant on the sense. When I read in your little volume, your nineteenth effusion, or the twenty-eighth or twenty-ninth, or what you call the 'Sigh,' I think I hear *you* again. I image to myself the little smoky room at the Salutation and Cat, where we have sat together through the winter nights, beguiling the cares of life with Poesy. When you left London, I felt a dismal void in my heart. I found myself cut off, at one and the same time, from two most dear to me. 'How blest with ye the path could I have trod of quiet life!' In your conversation you had blended so many pleasant fancies that they cheated me of my grief. But in your absence the tide of melancholy rushed in again and did its worst mischief by overwhelming my reason. I have recovered, but feel a stupor that makes me indifferent to the hopes and fears of this life. I sometimes wish to introduce a religious turn of mind, but habits are strong things, and my religious fervours are confined, alas! to some fleeting moments of occasional solitary devotion. A correspondence, opening with you, has roused me a little from my lethargy and made me conscious of existence. Indulge me in it: I will not be very troublesome!

At some future time I will amuse you with an account, as full as my memory will permit, of the strange turn my frenzy took. I look back upon it at times with a gloomy kind of envy; for, while it lasted, I had many, many hours of pure happiness. Dream not, Coleridge, of having tasted all the grandeur and wildness of fancy till you have gone mad! All now seems to me vapid, comparatively so. Excuse this selfish digression. Your 'Monody' is so superlatively excellent, that I can only wish it perfect, which I can't help feeling it is not quite. Indulge me in a few conjectures; what I am going to propose would make it more compressed, and, I think, more energetic, though I am sensible at the expense of many beautiful lines. Let it begin 'Is this the land of song-ennobled line?' and proceed to 'Otway's famished form;' then, 'Thee Chatterton,' to 'blaze of Seraphim;' then, 'clad in Nature's rich array,' to 'orient day;' then, 'but soon the scathing lightning,' to 'blighted land;' then, 'sublime of thought,' to 'his bosom glows;' then

> 'But soon upon *his* poor unsheltered head
> Did Penury her sickly mildew shed;
> And soon are fled the charms of early grace,
> And joy's wild gleams that lightened o'er his face.'

Then 'youth of tumultuous soul' to 'sigh,' as before. The rest may all stand down to 'gaze upon the waves below.' What follows now may come next as detached verses, suggested by the Monody, rather than a part of it. They are, indeed, in themselves, very sweet:

> 'And we, at sober eve, would round thee throng,
> Hanging enraptured on thy stately song!'

in particular, perhaps. If I am obscure, you may understand me by counting the lines: I have proposed omitting twenty-four lines: I feel that thus compressed it would gain energy, but think it most likely you will not agree with me; for who shall go about to bring opinions to the bed of Procrustes, and introduce among the sons of men a monotony of identical feelings? I only propose with diffidence. Reject you, if you please, with as little remorse as you would the colour of a coat or the pattern of a buckle, where our fancies differed.

"The 'Pixies' is a perfect thing, and so are the 'Lines on the Spring,' page 28. The 'Epitaph on an Infant,' like a Jack-o'-lānthorn, has danced about (or like Dr. Forster's scholars) out of the Morning Chronicle into the Watchman, and thence back into your collection. It is very pretty, and

you seem to think so, but, may be, o'erlooked its chief merit, that of filling up a whole page. I had once deemed sonnets of unrivalled use that way, but your Epitaphs, I find, are the more diffuse. 'Edmund' still holds its place among your best verses. 'Ah! fair delights' to 'roses round,' in your Poem called 'Absence,' recall (none more forcibly) to my mind the tones in which *you recited it*. I will not notice, in this tedious (to you) manner, verses which have been so long delightful to me, and which you already know my opinion of. Of this kind are Bowles, Priestley, and that most exquisite and most Bowles-like of all, the nineteenth effusion. It would have better ended with 'agony of care:' the two last lines are obvious and unnecessary, and you need not now make fourteen lines of it, now it is re-christened from a Sonnet to an Effusion. Schiller might have written the twentieth effusion: 'tis worthy of him in any sense. I was glad to meet with those lines you sent me, when my sister was so ill; I had lost the copy, and I felt not a little proud at seeing my name in your verse. The complaint of Ninathoma (first stanza in particular) is the best, or only good imitation of Ossian I ever saw—your 'Restless Gale' excepted. 'To an Infant' is most sweet; is not 'foodful,' though, very harsh? Would not 'dulcet' fruit be less harsh, or some other friendly bi-syllable? In 'Edmund,' 'Frenzy! fierce-eyed child' is not so well as 'frantic,' though that is an epithet adding nothing to the meaning. Slander *couching* was better than 'squatting.' In the 'Man of Ross' it *was* a better line thus:

'If 'neath this roof thy wine-cheered moments pass,'

than as it stands now. Time nor nothing can reconcile me to the concluding five lines of 'Kosciusko:' call it anything you will but sublime. In my twelfth effusion I had rather have seen what I wrote myself, though they bear no comparison with your exquisite lines—

'On rose-leaf'd beds amid your faery bowers,' &c.

"I love my sonnets because they are the reflected images of my own feelings at different times. To instance, in the thirteenth—

'How reason reeled,' &c.,

are good lines, but must spoil the whole with me, who know it is only a fiction of yours, and that the 'rude dashings' did in fact not 'rock me to repose.' I grant the same objection applies not to the former sonnet; but still I love my own feelings; they are dear to memory, though they

now and then wake a sigh or a tear. 'Thinking on divers things foredone,' I charge you, Coleridge, spare my ewe-lambs; and though a gentleman may borrow six lines in an epic poem (I should have no objection to borrow five hundred, and without acknowledging), still, in a sonnet, a personal poem, I do not 'ask my friend the aiding verse;' I would not wrong your feelings, by proposing any improvements (did I think myself capable of suggesting 'em) in such personal poems as 'Thou bleedest, my poor heart,'—'od so,—I am caught—I have already done it; but that simile I propose abridging, would not change the feeling or introduce any alien ones. Do you understand me? In the twenty-eighth, however, and in the 'Sigh,' and that composed at Clevedon, things that come from the heart direct, not by the medium of the fancy, I would not suggest an alteration. When my blank verse is finished, or any long fancy poem, 'propino tibi alterandum, cut-up-andum, abridgandum,' just what you will with it; but spare my ewe-lambs! That to 'Mrs. Siddons,' now, you were welcome to improve, if it had been worth it; but I say unto you again, Coleridge, spare my ewe-lambs! I must confess were they mine, I should omit, *in editione secundâ*, effusions two and three, because satiric, and below the dignity of the poet of 'Religious Musings,' fifth, seventh, half of the eighth, that 'Written in early youth,' as far as 'thousand eyes,'—though I part not unreluctantly with that lively line—

'Chaste joyance dancing in her bright blue eyes.'

and one or two just thereabouts. But I would substitute for it that sweet poem called 'Recollection,' in the fifth number of the Watchman, better, I think, than the remainder of this poem, though not differing materially: as the poem now stands it looks altogether confused; and do not omit those lines upon the 'Early Blossom,' in your sixth number of the Watchman; and I would omit the tenth effusion, or what would do better, alter and improve the last four lines. In fact, I suppose, if they were mine, I should *not* omit 'em; but your verse is, for the most part, so exquisite, that I like not to see aught of meaner matter mixed with it. Forgive my petulance, and often, I fear, ill-founded criticisms, and forgive me that I have, by this time, made your eyes and head ache with my long letter; but I cannot forego hastily the pleasure and pride of thus conversing with you. You did not tell me whether I was to

include the 'Conciones ad Populum' in my remarks on your poems. They are not unfrequently sublime, and I think you could not do better than to turn 'em into verse—if you have nothing else to do. A——, I am sorry to say, is a *confirmed* Atheist; S——, a cold-hearted, well-bred, conceited disciple of Godwin, does him no good.

"How I sympathize with you on the dull duty of a reviewer, and heartily damn with you Ned E—— and the Prosodist. I shall, however, wait impatiently for the articles in the Critical Review, next month, because they are *yours*. Young Evans (W. Evans, a branch of a family you were once so intimate with) is come into our office, and sends his love to you! Coleridge! I devoutly wish that Fortune, who has made sport with you so long, may play one freak more, throw you into London, or some spot near it, and there snug-ify you for life. 'Tis a selfish, but natural wish for me, cast as I am 'on life's wide plain, friendless.' Are you acquainted with Bowles? I see, by his last Elegy (written at Bath), you are near neighbours. *Thursday*.

"I do not know that I entirely agree with you in your stricture upon my sonnet 'To Innocence.' To men whose hearts are not quite deadened by their commerce with the world, innocence (no longer familiar) becomes an awful idea. So I felt when I wrote it. Your other censures (qualified and sweetened, though, with praises somewhat extravagant) I perfectly coincide with; yet I choose to retain the world 'lunar'—indulge a 'lunatic' in his loyalty to his mistress the moon! I have just been reading a most pathetic copy of verses on Sophia Pringle, who was hanged and burnt for coining. One of the strokes of pathos (which are very many, all somewhat obscure), is 'She lifted up her guilty forger to heaven.' A note explains, by 'forger,' her right hand, with which she forged or coined the base metal. For pathos read bathos. You have put me out of conceit with my blank verse by your 'Religious Musings.' I think it will come to nothing. I do not like 'em enough to send 'em. I have just been reading a book, which I may be too partial to, as it was the delight of my childhood; but I will recommend it to you;—it is Izaak Walton's 'Complete Angler.' All the scientific part you may omit in reading. The dialogue is very simple, full of pastoral beauties, and will charm you. Many pretty old verses are interspersed. This letter, which would be a week's work reading only, I do not wish you to answer it in less

than a month. I shall be richly content with a letter from you some day early in July; though, if you get any how *settled* before then, pray let me know it immediately; 'twould give me much satisfaction. Concerning the Unitarian chapel, the salary is the only scruple that the most rigid moralist would admit as valid. Concerning the tutorage, is not the salary low, and absence from your family unavoidable? London is the only fostering soil for genius. Nothing more occurs just now; so I will leave you, in mercy, one small white spot empty below, to repose your eyes upon, fatigued as they must be, with the wilderness of words they have by this time painfully travelled through. God love you, Coleridge, and prosper you through life; though mine will be loss if your lot is to be cast at Bristol, or at Nottingham, or anywhere but London. Our loves to Mrs. C——. C. L.

"*Friday*, 10*th June*, 1796."

Coleridge, settled in his melancholy cottage, invited Lamb to visit him. The hope—the expectation—the disappointment, are depicted in the following letter, written in the summer of the eventful year 1796.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"July 1st, 1796.

"The first moment I can come I will; but my hopes of coming yet a while, yet hang on a ticklish thread. The coach I come by is immaterial, as I shall so easily, by your direction, find ye out. My mother is grown so entirely helpless (not having any use of her limbs) that Mary is necessarily confined from ever sleeping out, she being her bedfellow. She thanks you though, and will accompany me in spirit. Most exquisite are the lines from Withers. Your own lines, introductory to your poem on 'Self,' run smoothly and pleasurably, and I exhort you to continue 'em. What shall I say to your 'Dactyls?' They are what you would call good *per se*, but a parody on some of 'em is just now suggesting itself, and you shall have it rough and unlicked; I mark with figures the lines parodied:—

4.—Sorely your Dactyls do drag along limp-footed.
5.—Sad is the measure that hangs a clog round 'em so.
6.—Meagre and languid, proclaiming its wretchedness.
1.—Weary, unsatisfied, not a little sick of 'em.
11.—Cold is my tired heart, I have no charity.
2.—Painfully travelling thus over the rugged road.
7.—O begone, measure, half Latin, half English, then.
12.—Dismal your Dactyls are, God help ye, rhyming ones!

"I possibly may not come this fortnight; therefore, all thou hast to do is not to look for me any particular day, only to write word immediately, if at any time you quit Bristol, lest I come and Taffy be not at home. I *hope* I can come in a day or two; but young S——, of my office, is suddenly taken ill in this very nick of time, and I must officiate for him till he can come to work again: had the knave gone sick, and died, and been buried at any other time, philosophy might have afforded one comfort, but just now I have no patience with him. Quarles I am as great a stranger to as I was to Withers. I wish you would try and do something to bring our elder bards into more general fame. I writhe with indignation when, in books of criticism, where commonplace quotation is heaped upon quotation, I find no mention of such men as Massinger, or Beaumont and Fletcher, men with whom succeeding dramatic writers (Otway alone excepted)* can bear no manner of comparison. Stupid Knox hath noticed none of 'em among his extracts.

"*Thursday*.—Mrs. C—— can scarce guess how she has gratified me by her very kind letter and sweet little poem. I feel that I *should* thank her in rhyme, but she must take my acknowledgment, at present, in plain honest prose. The uncertainty in which I yet stand, whether I can come or no, damps my spirits, reduces me a degree below prosaical, and keeps me in a suspense that fluctuates between hope and fear. Hope is a charming, lively, blue-eyed wench, and I am always glad of her company, but could dispense with the visitor she brings with her—her younger sister, Fear, a white-livered, lily-cheeked, bashful, palpitating, awkward hussy, that hangs, like a green girl, at her sister's apron-strings, and will go with her whithersoever *she* goes. For the life and soul of me, I could not improve those lines in your poem on the Prince and Princess, so I changed them to what you bid me, and left 'em at Perry's.† I think 'em

* An exception he certainly would not have made a few years afterward, for he used to mention two pretty lines in the "Orphan,"

"Sweet as the shepherd's pipe upon the mountains,
With all his fleecy flock at feed beside him,"

as a redeeming passage amidst mere stage trickeries. The great merit which lies in the construction of "Venice Preserved" was not in his line of appreciation; and he thought Thomson's reference to Otway's ladies—

——"poor Monimia moans,
And Belvidera pours her soul in love,"

worth both heroines.

† Some "occasional" verses of Coleridge's, written to order for the Morning Chronicle.

altogether good, and do not see why you were solicitous about *any* alteration. I have not yet seen, but will make it my business to see, to-day's Chronicle, for your verses on Horne Tooke. Dyer stanza'd him in one of the papers tother day, but, I think, unsuccessfully. Tooke's friends meeting was, I suppose, a dinner of condolence.* I am not sorry to find you (for all Sara) immersed in clouds of smoke and metaphysics. You know I had a sneaking kindness for this last noble science, and you taught me some smattering of it. I look to become no mean proficient under your tuition. Coleridge, what do you mean by saying you wrote to me about Plutarch and Porphyry? I received no such letter, nor remember a syllable of the matter, yet am not apt to forget any of your epistles, least of all an injunction like that. I will cast about for 'em, tho' I am a sad hand to know what books are worth, and both these worthy gentlemen are alike out of my line. To-morrow I shall be less suspensive, and in better cue to write, so good-by at present.

"*Friday Evening.*—That execrable aristocrat and knave R—— has given me an absolute refusal of leave. The *poor man* cannot guess at my disappointment. Is it not hard, 'this dread dependence on the low-bred mind?' Continue to write to me tho', and I must be content. Our loves and best good wishes attend upon you both.

"LAMB.

"S—— did return, but there are two or three more ill and absent, which was the plea for refusing me. I shall never have heart to ask for holidays again. The man next him in office, C——, furnished him with the objections.

"C. LAMB."

The little copy of verses in which Lamb commemorated and softened his disappointment, bearing date (a most unusual circumstance with Lamb) 5th July, 1796, was inclosed in a letter of the following day, which refers to a scheme Coleridge had formed of settling in London on an invitation to share the editorship of the Morning Chronicle. The poem includes a lamentation over a fantastical loss—that of a draught of the Avon "which Shakespeare drank," somewhat strangely confounding the Avon of Stratford with that of Bristol. It may be doubted whether Shakespeare knew the taste of the waves of one Avon

* This was just after the Westminster Election, in which Mr. Tooke was defeated.

more than of the other, or whether Lamb would not have found more kindred with the world's poet in a glass of sack than in the water of either stream. Coleridge must have enjoyed the misplaced sentiment of his friend, for he was singularly destitute of sympathy with local associations, which he regarded as interfering with the pure and simple impression of great deeds or thoughts; denied a special interest to the Pass of Thermopylæ; and instead of subscribing to purchase "Shakespeare's House," would scarcely have admitted the peculiar sanctity of the spot which enshrines his ashes.

TO SARA AND HER SAMUEL.

"Was it so hard a thing?—I did but ask
A fleeting holiday. One little week,
Or haply two, had bounded my request.

What, if the jaded steer, who all day long
Had borne the heat and labour of the plough,
When evening came, and her sweet cooling hour,
Should seek to trespass on a neighbour copse,
Where greener herbage waved, or clearer streams
Invited him to slake his burning thirst?
That man were crabbed who should say him nay;
That man were churlish who should drive him thence!
A blessing light upon your heads, ye good,
Ye hospitable pair! I may not come,
To catch on Clifden's heights the summer gale;
I may not come, a pilgrim, to the banks
Of Avon, lucid stream, to taste the wave
Which Shakespeare drank, our British Helicon;
Or with mine eye intent on Redcliffe towers,
To muse in tears on that mysterious youth,
Cruelly slighted, who to London walls,
In evil hour, shaped his disastrous course.

Complaint, begone; begone, unkind reproof;
Take up, my song, take up a merrier strain,
For yet again, and lo! from Avon's vales
Another 'minstrel' cometh! Youth endear'd,
God and good angels guide thee on thy way,
And gentler fortunes wait the friends I love.—C. L.

The letter accompanying these verses begins cheerfully thus:

"What can I do till you send word what priced and placed house you should like? Islington, possibly, you would not like; to me 'tis classical ground. Knightsbridge is a desirable situation for the air of the parks; St. George's Fields is convenient for its contiguity to the Bench. Choose! But are you really coming to town? The hope of it has entirely disarmed my petty disappointment of its nettles, yet I rejoice so much on my own account, that I fear I do not feel enough pure satisfaction on yours. Why, surely, the joint editorship of the Chronicle must be very

comfortable and secure living for a man. But should not you read French, or do you? and can you write with sufficient moderation, as 'tis called, when one suppresses the one half of what one feels or could say on a subject, to chime in the better with popular lukewarmness? White's 'Letters' are near publication; could you review 'em or get 'em reviewed? Are you not connected with the Critical Review? His frontispiece is a good conceit—Sir John learning to dance to please Madam Page, in dress of doublet, &c., from the upper half, and modern pantaloons with shoes, &c., of the eighteenth century, from the lower half; and the whole work is full of goodly quips and rare fancies, 'all deftly masqued like hoar antiquity'—much superior to Dr. Kenrick's 'Falstaff's Wedding,' which you have seen. A—— sometimes laughs at superstition, and religion, and the like. A living fell vacant lately in the gift of the Hospital: White informed him that he stood a fair chance for it. He scrupled and scrupled about it, and at last, to use his own words, 'tampered' with Godwin to know whether the thing was honest or not. Godwin said nay to it, and A—— rejected the living! Could the blindest poor papist have bowed more servilely to his priest or casuist? Why sleep the Watchman's answers to that Godwin? I beg you will not delay to alter, if you mean to keep those last lines I sent you. Do that and read these for your pains:

TO THE POET COWPER.

"Cowper, I thank my God that thou art heal'd!
Thine was the sorest malady of all;
And I am sad to think that it should light
Upon the worthy head! But thou art heal'd,
And thou art yet, we trust, the destined man,
Born to reanimate the lyre, whose chords
Have slumber'd, and have idle lain so long;
To the immortal sounding of whose strings
Did Milton frame the stately-paced verse;
Among whose wires with light finger playing,
Our elder bard, Spenser, a gentle name,
The lady Muses' dearest darling child,
Elicited the deftest tunes yet heard
In hall or bow'r, taking the delicate ear
Of Sidney and his peerless Maiden Queen.
Thou, then, take up the mighty epic strain,
Cowper, of England's Bards, the wisest and the best.

1796.

"I have read your climax of praises in those three Reviews. These mighty spouters out of panegyric waters have, two of 'em, scattered their spray even upon me, and the waters are cooling and refreshing. Prosaically, the Monthly reviewers have made indeed a large article of it,

and done you justice. The Critical have, in their wisdom, selected not the very best specimens, and notice not, except as one name on the muster-roll, the 'Religious Musings.' I suspect Master Dyer to have been the writer of that article, as the substance of it was the very remarks and the very language he used to me one day. I fear you will not accord entirely with my sentiments of Cowper, as *expressed* above (perhaps scarcely just); but the poor gentleman has just recovered from his lunacies, and that begets pity, and pity love, and love admiration; and then it goes hard with people but they lie! Have you read the Ballad called 'Leonora,' in the second number of the Monthly Magazine? If you have!!!! There is another fine song, from the same author (Bürger), in the third number, of scarce inferior merit; and (vastly below these) there are some happy specimens of English hexameters, in an imitation of Ossian, in the fifth number. For your Dactyls—I am sorry you are so sore about 'em—a very Sir Fretful! In good troth, the Dactyls are good Dactyls, but their measure is naught. Be not yourself 'half anger, half agony,' if I pronounce your darling lines not to be the best you ever wrote in all your life—you have written much.

"Have a care, good Master Poet, of the Statute *de Contumeliâ*. What do you mean by calling Madame Mara—harlot and naughty things?* The goodness of the verse would not save you in a court of justice. But are you really coming to town? Coleridge, a gentleman called in London lately from Bristol, and inquired whether there were any of the family of a Mr. Chambers living: this Mr. Chambers, he said, had been the making of a friend's fortune, who wished to make some return for it. He went away without seeing her. Now, a Mrs. Reynolds, a very intimate friend of ours, whom you have seen at our house, is the only daughter, and all that survives, of Mr. Chambers; and a very little supply would be of service to her, for she married very unfortunately, and has parted with her husband. Pray find out this Mr. Pember (for that was the gentleman's friend's name); he is an attorney, and lives at Bristol. Find him out, and acquaint him with the circumstances of the case, and offer to be the medium of supply to Mrs. Reynolds, if he chooses to make her a pres-

* ——— "I detest
These scented rooms, where, to a gaudy throng,
Heaves the proud harlot her distended breast
In intricacies of laborious song."
Lines composed in a Concert Room, by S. T. C.

ent. She is in very distressed circumstances. Mr. Pember, attorney, Bristol. Mr. Chambers lived in the Temple; Mrs. Reynolds, his daughter, was my schoolmistress, and is in the room at this present writing. This last circumstance induced me to write so soon again. I have not further to add. Our loves to Sara. *Thursday.*

"C. LAMB."

CHAPTER II.

Letters of Lamb to Coleridge, chiefly relating to the death of Mrs. Lamb, and Miss Lamb's subsequent condition.

THE autumn of 1796 found Lamb engaged all the morning in task-work at the India House, and all the evening in attempting to amuse his father by playing cribbage; sometimes snatching a few minutes for his only pleasure, writing to Coleridge; while Miss Lamb was worn down to a state of extreme nervous misery, by attention to needlework by day, and to her mother by night, until the insanity, which had been manifested more than once, broke out into frenzy, which, on Thursday, 22d of September, proved fatal to her mother. The following account of the proceedings on the inquest, copied from the "Times" of Monday, 26th September, 1796, supplies the details of this terrible calamity, doubtless with accuracy, except that it would seem, from Lamb's ensuing letter to Coleridge, that *he*, and not the landlord, took the knife from the unconscious hand.

"On Friday afternoon, the coroner and a jury sat on the body of a lady in the neighbourhood of Holburn, who died in consequence of a wound from her daughter the preceding day. It appeared, by the evidence adduced, that, while the family were preparing for dinner, the young lady seized a case-knife lying on the table, and in a menacing manner pursued a little girl, her apprentice, round the room. On the calls of her infirm mother to forbear, she renounced her first object, and, with loud shrieks, approached her parent. The child, by her cries, quickly brought up the landlord of the house, but too late. The dreadful scene presented to him the mother lifeless, pierced to the heart, on a chair, her daughter yet wildly standing over her with the fatal knife, and the old man, her father, weeping by her side,

himself bleeding at the forehead from the effects of a severe blow he received from one of the forks she had been madly hurling about the room.

"For a few days prior to this, the family had observed some symptoms of insanity in her, which had so much increased on the Wednesday evening, that her brother, early the next morning, went to Dr. Pitcairn, but that gentleman was not at home.

"It seems the young lady had been once before deranged.

"The jury, of course, brought in their verdict—*Lunacy*."*

The following is Lamb's account of the event to Coleridge:

"September 27th, 1796.

"My dearest Friend,—White, or some of my friends, or the public papers, by this time may have informed you of the terrible calamities that have fallen on our family. I will only give you the outlines:—My poor dear, dearest sister, in a fit of insanity, has been the death of her own mother. I was at hand only time enough to snatch the knife out of her grasp. She is at present in a madhouse, from whence I fear she must be moved to an hospital. God has preserved to me my senses,—I eat, and drink, and sleep, and have my judgment, I believe, very sound. My poor father was slightly wounded, and I am left to take care of him and my aunt. Mr. Norris, of the Blue-coat School, has been very kind to us, and we have no other friend; but, thank God, I am very calm and composed, and able to do the best that remains to do. Write as religious a letter as possible, but no mention of what is gone and done with. With me 'the former things are passed away,' and I have something more to do than to feel.

"God Almighty have us well in his keeping.

"C. LAMB.

"Mention nothing of poetry. I have destroyed every vestige of past vanities of that kind. Do as you please, but if you publish, publish mine (I give free leave) with-

* A statement nearly similar to this will be found in several other journals of the day, and in the Annual Register for the year. The "True Briton" adds: "It appears she had been before, in the earlier part of her life, deranged, from the harassing fatigues of too much business. As her carriage towards her mother had always been affectionate in the extreme, it is believed her increased attachment to her, as her infirmities called for it by day and by night, caused her loss of reason at this time. It has been stated in some of the morning papers that she has an insane brother in confinement, but this is without foundation." None of the accounts give the names of the sufferers; but in the index to the Annual Register, the anonymous account is referred to with Mrs. Lamb's name.

out name or initial, and never send me a book, I charge you.

"Your own judgment will convince you not to take any notice of this yet to your dear wife. You look after your family—I have my reason and strength left to take care of mine. I charge you, don't think of coming to see me. Write. I will not see you if you come. God Almighty love you and all of us. C. LAMB."

After the inquest, Miss Lamb was placed in an asylum, where she was, in a short time, restored to reason. The following is Lamb's next letter:—

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"October 3d, 1796.

"My dearest Friend,—Your letter was an inestimable treasure to me. It will be a comfort to you, I know, to know that our prospects are somewhat brighter. My poor dear, dearest sister, the unhappy and unconscious instrument of the Almighty's judgments on our house, is restored to her senses; to a dreadful sense and recollection of what has passed, awful to her mind and impressive (as it must be to the end of life), but tempered with religious resignation and the reasonings of a sound judgment, which, in this early stage, knows how to distinguish between a deed committed in a transient fit of frenzy, and the terrible guilt of a mother's murder. I have seen her. I found her, this morning, calm and serene; far, very, very far from an indecent forgetful serenity; she has a most affectionate and tender concern for what has happened. Indeed, from the beginning, frightful and hopeless as her disorder seemed, I had confidence enough in her strength of mind and religious principle to look forward to a time when *even she* might recover tranquillity. God be praised, Coleridge, wonderful as it is to tell, I have never once been otherwise than collected and calm; even on the dreadful day, and in the midst of the terrible scene, I preserved a tranquillity which bystanders may have construed into indifference—a tranquillity not of despair. Is it folly or sin in me to say that it was a religious principle that *most* supported me? I allow much to other favourable circumstances. I felt that I had something else to do than to regret. On that first evening, my aunt was lying insensible, to all appearance like one dying—my father, with his poor forehead plastered over, from a wound he had re-

ceived from a daughter, dearly loved by him, and who loved him no less dearly—my mother a dead and murdered corpse in the next room—yet was I wonderfully supported. I closed not my eyes in sleep that night, but lay without terrors and without despair. I have lost no sleep since. I had been long used not to rest in things of sense—had endeavoured after a comprehension of mind, unsatisfied with the 'ignorant present time,' and *this* kept me up. I had the whole weight of the family thrown on me; for my brother, little disposed (I speak not without tenderness for him) at any time to take care of old age and infirmities, had now, with his bad leg, an exemption from such duties, and I was now left alone. One little incident may serve to make you understand my way of managing my mind. Within a day or two after the fatal one, we dressed for dinner a tongue which we had had salted for some weeks in the house. As I sat down, a feeling like remorse struck me—this tongue poor Mary got for me, and can I partake of it now, when she is far away? A thought occurred and relieved me—if I give in to this way of feeling, there is not a chair, a room, an object in our rooms, that will not awaken the keenest griefs; I must rise above such weaknesses. I hope this was not a want of true feeling. I did not let this carry me, though, too far. On the very second day (I date from the day of horrors), as is usual in such cases, there were a matter of twenty people, I do think, supping in our room; they prevailed on me to eat *with them* (for to eat I never refused). They were all making merry in the room! Some had come from friendship, some from busy curiosity, and some from interest; I was going to partake with them, when my recollection came that my poor dead mother was lying in the next room—the very next room; a mother who, through life, wished nothing but her children's welfare. Indignation, the rage of grief, something like remorse, rushed upon my mind. In an agony of emotion, I found my way mechanically to the adjoining room, and fell on my knees by the side of her coffin, asking forgiveness of heaven, and sometimes of her, for forgetting her so soon. Tranquillity returned, and it was the only violent emotion that mastered me, and I think it did me good.

"I mention these things because I hate concealment, and love to give a faithful journal of what passes within me. Our friends have been very good. Sam Le Grice, who was then in town, was with me the three or four first days, and

was as a brother to me, gave up every hour of his time, to the very hurting of his health and spirits, in constant attendance and humouring my poor father; talked with him, read to him, played at cribbage with him (for so short is the old man's recollection, that he was playing at cards, as though nothing had happened, while the coroner's inquest was sitting over the way!) Samuel wept tenderly when he went away, for his mother wrote him a very severe letter on his loitering so long in town, and he was forced to go. Mr. Norris, of Christ's Hospital, has been as a father to me—Mrs. Norris as a mother, though we had few claims on them. A gentleman, brother to my godmother, from whom we never had right or reason to expect any such assistance, sent my father twenty pounds; and, to crown all these God's blessings to our family at such a time, an old lady, a cousin of my father's and aunt's, a gentlewoman of fortune, is to take my aunt and make her comfortable for the short remainder of her days. My aunt is recovered, and as well as ever, and is highly pleased at the thoughts of going—and has generously given up the interest of her little money (which was formerly paid my father for her board) wholely and solely to my sister's use. Reckoning this, we have, Daddy and I, for our two selves, and an old maid-servant to look after him when I am out, which will be necessary, £170 or £180 rather a year, out of which we can spare £50 or £60 at least for Mary, while she stays at Islington, where she must and shall stay during her father's life, for his and her comfort. I know John will make speeches about it, but she shall not go into an hospital. The good lady of the madhouse, and her daughter, an elegant, sweet-behaved young lady, love her, and are taken with her amazingly; and I know from her own mouth she loves them, and longs to be with them as much. Poor thing! they say she was but the other morning saying she must go to Bethlem for life; that one of her brothers would have it so, but the other would wish it not, but be obliged to go with the stream; that she had often, as she passed Bethlem, thought it likely 'here it may be my fate to end my days,' conscious of a certain flightiness in her poor head oftentimes, and mindful of more than one severe illness of that nature before. A legacy of £100, which my father will have at Christmas, and this £20 I mentioned before, with what is in the house, will much more than set us clear. If my father, an old servant-maid, and I, can't live, and live comfortably, on £130 or £120 a

year, we ought to burn by slow fires; and I almost would, that Mary might not go into an hospital. Let me not leave one unfavourable impression on your mind respecting my brother. Since this has happened, he has been very kind and brotherly; but I fear for his mind; he has taken his ease in the world, and is not fit himself to struggle with difficulties, nor has much accustomed himself to throw himself into their way; and I know his language is already, 'Charles, you must take care of yourself, you must not abridge yourself of a single pleasure you have been used to,' &c. &c., and in that style of talking. But you, a necessarian, can respect a difference of mind, and love what *is amiable* in a character not perfect. He has been very good —but I fear for his mind. Thank God, I can unconnect myself with him, and shall manage all my father's moneys in future myself, if I take charge of Daddy, which poor John has not even hinted a wish, at any future time even, to share with me. The lady at this madhouse assures me that I may dismiss immediately both doctor and apothecary, retaining occasionally a composing draught or so for a while; and there is a less expensive establishment in her house, where she will only not have a room and nurse to herself, for £50 or guineas a year—the outside would be £60—you know, by economy, how much more even I shall be able to spare for her comforts. She will, I fancy, if she stays, make one of the family, rather than of the patients; and the old and young ladies I like exceedingly, and she loves dearly; and they, as the saying is, take to her very extraordinarily, if it is extraordinary that people who see my sister should love her. Of all the people I ever saw in the world, my poor sister was most and thoroughly devoid of the least tincture of selfishness. I will enlarge upon her qualities, poor dear, dearest soul, in a future letter, for my own comfort, for I understand her thoroughly; and, if I mistake not, in the most trying situation that a human being can be found in, she will be found (I speak not with sufficient humility, I fear, but humanly and foolishly speaking), she will be found, I trust, uniformly great and amiable. God keep her in her present mind, to whom be thanks and praise for all His dispensations to mankind. C. LAMB.

"These mentioned good fortunes and change of prospects had almost brought my mind over to the extreme, the very opposite to despair. I was in danger of making myself too happy. Your letter brought me back to a view of things which I had entertained from the beginning. I

hope (for Mary I can answer)—but I hope that *I* shall through life never have less recollection, nor a fainter impression, of what has happened than I have now. 'Tis not a light thing, nor meant by the Almighty to be received lightly. I must be serious, circumspect, and deeply religious through life; and by such means may *both* of us escape madness in future, if it so please the Almighty!

"Send me word how it fares with Sara. I repeat it, your letter was, and will be, an inestimable treasure to me. You have a view of what my situation demands of me, like my own view, and I trust a just one.

"Coleridge, continue to write; but do not for ever offend me by talking of sending me cash. Sincerely, and on my soul, we do not want it. God love you both.

"I will write again very soon. Do you write directly."

As Lamb recovered from the shock of his own calamity, he found comfort in gently admonishing his friend on that imbecility of purpose which attended the development of his mighty genius. His next letter, commencing with this office of friendship, soon reverts to the condition of that sufferer, who was endeared to him the more because others shrank from and forsook her.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"October 17th, 1796.

"My dearest Friend,—I grieve from my very soul to observe you in your plans of life, veering about from this hope to the other, and settling nowhere. Is it an untoward fatality (speaking humanly) that does this for you—a stubborn, irresistible concurrence of events—or lies the fault, as I fear it does, in your own mind? You seem to be taking up splendid schemes of fortune only to lay them down again; and your fortunes are an *ignis fatuus* that has been conducting you, in thought, from Lancaster-court, Strand, to somewhere near Matlock; then jumping across to Dr. Somebody's, whose son's tutor you were likely to be; and, would to God, the dancing demon *may* conduct you at last, in peace and comfort, to the 'life and labours of a cottager.' You see, from the above awkward playfulness of fancy, that my spirits are not quite depressed. I should ill deserve God's blessings, which, since the late terrible event, have come down in mercy upon us, if I indulged regret or querulousness. Mary continues serene and cheerful. I have not by me a little letter she wrote to me; for, though

I see her almost every day, yet we delight to write to one another, for we can scarce see each other but in company with some of the people of the house. I have not the letter by me, but will quote from memory what she wrote in it: 'I have no bad terrifying dreams. At midnight, when I happen to awake, the nurse sleeping by the side of me, with the noise of the poor mad people around me, I have no fear. The spirit of my mother seems to descend and smile upon me, and bid me live to enjoy the life and reason which the Almighty has given me. I shall see her again in heaven; she will then understand me better. My grandmother, too, will understand me better, and will then say no more, as she used to do, "Polly, what are those poor crazy moythered brains of yours thinking of always?"' Poor Mary! my mother indeed *never understood* her right. She loved her, as she loved us all, with a mother's love; but in opinion, in feeling, and sentiment, and disposition, bore so distant a resemblance to her daughter, that she never understood her right; never could believe how much *she* loved her; but met her caresses, her protestations of fillial affection, too frequently with coldness and repulse. Still she was a good mother. God forbid I should think of her but *most* respectfully, *most* affectionately. Yet she would always love my brother above Mary, who was not worthy of one-tenth of that affection which Mary had a right to claim. But it is my sister's gratifying recollection, that every act of duty and of love she could pay, every kindness (and I speak true when I say, to the hurting of her health, and most probably, in great part, to the derangement of her senses), through a long course of infirmities and sickness, she could show her, she ever did. I will, some day, as I promised, enlarge to you upon my sister's excellences; 'twill seem like exaggeration, but I will do it. At present, short letters suit my state of mind best. So take my kindest wishes for your comfort and establishment in life, and for Sara's welfare and comforts with you. God love you. God love us all. C. LAMB."

Miss Lamb's gradual restoration to comfort, and her brother's earnest watchfulness over it, are illustrated in the following fragment of a letter:

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"October 28th, 1796.

"I have satisfaction in being able to bid you rejoice with

me in my sister's continued reason, and composedness of mind. Let us both be thankful for it. I continue to visit her very frequently, and the people of the house are vastly indulgent to her; she is likely to be as comfortably situated as those who pay twice or thrice the sum. They love her, and she loves them, and makes herself very useful to them. Benevolence sets out on her journey with a good heart, and puts a good face on it, but is apt to limp and grow feeble, unless she calls in the aid of self-interest, by way of a crutch. In Mary's case, as far as respects those she is with, 'tis well that these principles are so likely to co-operate. I am rather at a loss sometimes for books for her—our reading is somewhat confined, and we have nearly exhausted our London library. She has her hands too full of work to read much, but a little she must read, for reading was her daily bread."

Two months, though passed by Lamb in anxiety and labour, but cheered by Miss Lamb's continued possession of reason, so far restored the tone of his mind, that his interest in the volume which had been contemplated to introduce his first verses to the world, in association with those of his friend, was enkindled anew. While cherishing the hope of reunion with his sister, and painfully wresting his leisure hours from poetry and Coleridge to amuse the dotage of his father, he watched over his own returning sense of enjoyment with a sort of holy jealousy, apprehensive lest he should forget too soon the terrible visitation of Heaven. At this time he thus writes:

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"December 2d, 1796.

"I have delayed writing thus long, not having by me my copy of your poems, which I had lent. I am not satisfied with all your intended omissions. Why omit 40, 63, 84? above all, let me protest strongly against your rejecting the 'Complaint of Ninathoma,' 86. The words, I acknowledge, are Ossian's, but you have added to them the 'music of Caril.' If a vicarious substitute be wanting, sacrifice (and 'twill be a piece of self-denial *too*) the 'Epitaph on an Infant,' of which its author seems so proud, so tenacious. Or, if your heart be set on *perpetuating* the four-line wonder, I'll tell you what do; sell the copyright of it at once to a country statuary; commence in this manner Death's

prime poet-laureate; and let your verses be adopted in every village round, instead of those hitherto famous ones:

'Afflictions sore long time I bore,
Physicians were in vain.'*

"I have seen your last very beautiful poem in the Monthly Magazine: write thus, and you most generally have written thus, and I shall never quarrel with you about simplicity. With regard to my lines—

'Laugh all that weep,' &c.,

I would willingly sacrifice them; but my portion of the volume is so ridiculously little, that, in honest truth, I can't spare them: as things are, I have very slight pretensions to participate in the title-page. White's book is at length reviewed in the Monthly; was it your doing, or Dyer's, to whom I sent him?—or, rather, do you not write in the Critical?—for I observed, in an article of this month's, a line quoted out of *that* sonnet on Mrs. Siddons,

'With eager wondering, and perturb'd delight.'

And a line from *that* sonnet would not readily have occurred to a stranger. That sonnet, Coleridge, brings afresh to my mind the time when you wrote those on Bowles, Priestley, Burke—'twas two Christmases ago, and in that nice little smoky room at the Salutation, which is ever now continually presenting itself to my recollection, with all its associated train of pipes, tobacco, egg-hot, welsh-rabbits, metaphysics, and poetry. Are we *never* to meet again? How differently I am circumstanced now! I have never met with any one—never shall meet with any one—who could or can compensate me for the loss of your society. I have no one to talk all these matters about to; I lack friends, I lack books to supply their absence; but these complaints ill become me. Let me compare my present situation, prospects, and state of mind, with what they were but two months back—but two months! O my friend, I am in danger of forgetting the awful lessons then presented to me! Remind me of them; remind me of my duty! Talk

* This epitaph, which, notwithstanding Lamb's gentle banter, occupied an entire page in the book, is curious—"a miracle instead of wit"—for it is a *commonplace* of Coleridge, who, investing ordinary things with a dreamy splendour, or weighing them down with accumulated thought, has rarely, if ever, written a stanza so smoothly vapid—so devoid of merit or offence—(unless it be an offence to make *fade* do duty as a verb active) as the following:—

"Ere sin could blight or sorrow *fade*,
Death came with friendly care;
The opening bud to Heaven convey'd,
And bade it blossom there."

seriously with me when you do write! I thank you, from my heart I thank you, for your solicitude about my sister. She is quite well, but must not, I fear, come to live with us yet a good while. In the first place, because, at present, it would hurt her, and hurt my father, for them to be together; secondly, from a regard to the world's good report, for, I fear, tongues will be busy *whenever* that event takes place. Some have hinted, one man has pressed it on me, that she should be in perpetual confinement: what she hath done to deserve, or the necessity of such an hardship, I see not; do you? I am starving at the India House—near seven o'clock without my dinner, and so it has been, and will be, almost all the week. I get home at night o'erwearied, quite faint, and then to cards with my father, who will not let me enjoy a meal in peace; but I must conform to my situation, and I hope I am, for the most part, not unthankful.

"I am got home at last, and, after repeated games at cribbage, have got my father's leave to write awhile; with difficulty got it, for, when I expostulated about playing any more, he very aptly replied, 'If you won't play with me, you might as well not come home at all.' The argument was unanswerable, and I set to afresh. I told you I do not approve of your omissions, neither do I quite coincide with you in your arrangements. I have not time to point out a better, and I suppose some self-associations of your own have determined their place as they now stand. Your beginning, indeed, with the 'Joan of Arc' lines I coincide entirely with. I love a splendid outset—a magnificent portico—and the diapason is grand. When I read the 'Religious Musings,' I think how poor, how unelevated, unoriginal, my blank verse is—'Laugh all that weep,' especially, where the subject demanded a grandeur of conception; and I ask what business they have among yours? but friendship covereth a multitude of defects. I want some loppings made in the 'Chatterton;' it wants but a little to make it rank among the finest irregular lyrics I ever read. Have you time and inclination to go to work upon it—or is it too late—or do you think it needs none? Don't reject those verses in one of your Watchmen, 'Dear native brook,' &c.; nor I think those last lines you sent me, in which 'all effortless' is without doubt to be preferred to 'inactive.' If I am writing more than ordinarily dully, 'tis that I am stupified with a tooth-ache. Hang it! do not omit 48, 52, and 53: what you do retain, though, call sonnets, for heav-

en s sake, and not effusions. Spite of your ingenious anticipations of ridicule in your preface, the five last lines of 50 are too good to be lost, the rest is not much worth. My tooth becomes importunate—I must finish. Pray, pray, write to me: if you knew with what an anxiety of joy I open such a long packet as you last sent me, you would not grudge giving a few minutes now and then to this intercourse (the only intercourse I fear we two shall ever have) —this conversation with your friend—such I boast to be called. God love you and yours! Write me when you move, lest I direct wrong. Has Sara no poems to publish? Those lines, 129, are probably too light for the volume where the 'Religious Musings' are, but I remember some very beautiful lines, addressed by somebody at Bristol to somebody in London. God bless you once more. *Thursday night.* C. LAMB."

In another letter, about this time (December, 1796), Lamb transmitted to Coleridge two poems for the volume —one a copy of verses "To a Young Lady going out to India," which were not inserted, and are not worthy of preservation; the other entitled "The Tomb of Douglas," which was inserted, and which he chiefly valued as a memorial of his impression of Mrs. Siddons' acting in Lady Randolph. The following passage closes the sheet:

"At length I have done with verse-making; not that I relish other people's poetry less; their's comes from 'em without effort, mine is the difficult operation of a brain scanty of ideas, made more difficult by disuse. I have been reading 'The Task' with fresh delight I am glad you love Cowper: I could forgive a man for not enjoying Milton, but I would not call that man my friend who should be offended with the 'divine chit-chat of Cowper.' Write to me. God love you and yours. C. L."

The following, of 10th December, 1796, illustrates Lamb's almost wayward admiration of his only friend, and a feeling—how temporary with him!—of vexation with the imperfect sympathies of his elder brother.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"You sent me some very sweet lines relative to Burns, but it was at a time when, in my highly agitated and perhaps distorted state of mind, I thought it a duty to read 'em hastily and burn 'em. I burned all my own verses; all

my book of extracts from Beaumont and Fletcher and a thousand sources; I burned a little journal of my foolish passion which I had a long time kept—

'Noting ere they pass'd away
The little lines of yesterday.'

I almost burned all your letters—I did as bad, I lent 'em to a friend to keep out of my brother's sight, should he come and make inquisition into our papers, for, much as he dwelt upon your conversation while you were among us, and delighted to be with you, it has been his fashion ever since to depreciate and cry you down: you were the cause of my madness—you and your damned foolish sensibility and melancholy—and he lamented with a true brotherly feeling that we ever met, even as the sober citizen, when his son went astray upon the mountains of Parnassus, is said to have 'cursed wit, and poetry, and Pope.' I quote wrong, but no matter. These letters I lent to a friend to be out of the way, for a season, but I have claimed them in vain, and shall not cease to regret their loss. Your packets, posterior to the date of my misfortunes, commencing with that valuable consolatory epistle, are every day accumulating—they are sacred things with me."

The following long letter, bearing date on the outside, 5th January, 1797, is addressed to Mr. Coleridge at Stowey, near Bridgewater, whither he had removed from Bristol, to enjoy the society and protection of his friend Mr. Poole. The original is a curious specimen of clear compressed penmanship, being contained in three sides of a sheet of foolscap.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"*Sunday morning.*—You cannot surely mean to degrade the Joan of Arc into a pot-girl. You are not going, I hope, to annex to that most splendid ornament of Southey's poem all this cock-and-a-bull story of Joan, the publican's daughter of Neufchatel, with the lamentable episode of a wagoner, his wife, and six children. The texture will be most lamentably disproportionate. The first forty or fifty lines of these addenda are, no doubt, in their way, admirable too; but many would prefer the Joan of Southey.

'On mightiest deeds to brood
Of shadowy vastness, such as made my heart
Throb fast; anon I paused, and in a state
Of half expectance listened to the wind;'

'They wondered at me, who had known me once
A cheerful careless damsel;'

'The eye,
That of the circling throng and of the visible world
Unseeing, saw the shapes of holy phantasy;'

I see nothing in your description of the Maid equal to these. There is a fine originality certainly in those lines—

'For she had lived in this bad world
As in a place of tombs,
And touched not the pollutions of the dead;'

but your 'fierce vivacity' is a faint copy of the 'fierce and terrible benevolence' of Southey; added to this, that it will look like rivalship in you, and extort a comparison with Southey, I think to your disadvantage. And the lines, considered in themselves as an addition to what you had before written (strains of a far higher mood), are but such as Madame Fancy loves in some of her more familiar moods, at such times as she has met Noll Goldsmith, and walked and talked with him, calling him 'old acquaintance.' Southey certainly has no pretensions to vie with you in the sublime of poetry; but he tells a plain tale better than you. I will enumerate some woful blemishes, some of 'em sad deviations from that simplicity which was your aim. 'Hailed who might be near' (the 'canvas-coverture moving,' by the by, is laughable); 'a woman and six children' (by the way, why not nine children? It would have been just half as pathetic again): 'statues of sleep they seemed:' 'frost-mangled wretch:' 'green putridity:' 'hailed him immortal' (rather ludicrous again): 'voiced a sad and simple tale' (abominable!): 'improvendered:' 'such his tale:' 'Ah! suffering to the height of what was suffered' (a most *insufferable line*): 'amazements of affright:' 'the hot sore brain attributes its own hues of ghastliness and torture' (what shocking confusion of ideas!).

"In these delineations of common and natural feelings, in the familiar walks of poetry, you seem to resemble Montauban dancing with Roubigné's tenants, '*much of his native loftiness remained in the execution.*'

"I was reading your 'Religious Musings' the other day, and sincerely I think it the noblest poem in the language, next after the 'Paradise Lost,' and even that was not made the vehicle of such grand truths. 'There is one mind,' &c., down to 'Almighty's throne,' are without a rival in the whole compass of my poetical reading.

'Stands in the sun, and with no partial gaze,
Views all creation.'

I wish I could have written those lines. I rejoice that I am able to relish them. The loftier walks of Pindus are your proper region. There you have no compeer in modern times. Leave the lowlands, unenvied, in possession of such men as Cowper and Southey. Thus am I pouring balsam into the wounds I may have been inflicting on my poor friend's vanity.

"In your notice of Southey's new volume you omit to mention the most pleasing of all, the 'Miniature'—

'There were
Who formed high hopes and flattering ones of thee.
Young Robert!'
'Spirit of Spenser!—was the wanderer wrong?'

"Fairfax I have been in quest of a long time. Johnson, in his 'Life of Waller,' gives a most delicious specimen of him, and adds, in the true manner of that delicate critic, as well as amiable man, 'It may be presumed that this old version will not be much read after the elegant translation of my friend, Mr. Hoole.' I endeavoured—I wished to gain some idea of Tasso from this Mr. Hoole, the great boast and ornament of the India House, but soon desisted. I found him more vapid than smallest small beer 'sun-vinegared.' Your 'Dream,' down to that exquisite line—

'I can't tell half his adventures,'

is a most happy resemblance of Chaucer. The remainder is so so. The best line, I think, is, 'He belong'd, I believe, to the witch Melancholy.' By the way, when will our volume come out? Don't delay it till you have written a new Joan of Arc. Send what letters you please by me, and in any way you choose, single or double. The India Company is better adapted to answer the cost than the generality of my friend's correspondents—such poor and honest dogs as John Thelwall, particularly. I cannot say I know Colson, at least intimately; I once supped with him and Allen; I think his manners very pleasing. I will not tell you what I think of Lloyd, for he may by chance come to see this letter, and that thought puts a restraint on me. I cannot think what subject would suit your epic genius; some philosophical subject, I conjecture, in which shall be blended the sublime of poetry and of science. Your proposed 'Hymns' will be a fit preparatory study wherewith 'to discipline your young noviciate soul.' I grow dull; I'll go walk myself out of my dulness.

"*Sunday night.*—You and Sara are very good to think so kindly and so favourably of poor Mary; I would to God all

did so too. But I very much fear she must not think of coming home in my father's lifetime. It is very hard upon her; but our circumstances are peculiar, and we must submit to them. God be praised she is so well as she is. She bears her situation as one who has no right to complain. My poor old aunt, whom you have seen, the kindest, goodest creature to me when I was at school; who used to toddle there to bring me good things, when I, school-boy like, only despised her for it, and used to be ashamed to see her come and sit herself down on the old coal-hole steps as you went into the old grammar-school, and open her apron, and bring out her bason, with some nice thing she had caused to be saved for me; the good old creature is now lying on her death-bed. I cannot bear to think on her deplorable state. To the shock she received on that our evil day, from which she never completely recovered. I impute her illness. She says, poor thing, she is glad she is come home to die with me. I was always her favourite:

> 'No after friendship e'er can raise
> The endearments of our early days;
> Nor e'er the heart such fondness prove,
> As when it first began to love.'

"Lloyd has kindly left me, for a keep-sake, 'John Woolman.' You have read it, he says, and like it. Will you excuse one short extract? I think it could not have escaped you. 'Small treasure to a resigned mind is sufficient. How happy is it to be content with a little, to live in humility, and feel that in us, which breathes out this language—Abba! Father!' —— I am almost ashamed to patch up a letter in this miscellaneous sort; but I please myself in the thought, that anything from me will be acceptable to you. I am rather impatient, childishly so, to see our names affixed to the same common volume. Send me two, when it does come out; two will be enough—or indeed one—but two better. I have a dim recollection that, when in town, you were talking of the Origin of Evil as a most prolific subject for a long poem; why not adopt it, Coleridge? there would be room for imagination. Or the description (from a Vision or Dream, suppose) of an Utopia in one of the planets (the moon, for instance). Or a Five Days' Dream, which shall illustrate, in sensible imagery, Hartley's five Motives to Conduct:—1. Sensation; 2. Imagination; 3. Ambition; 4. Sympathy; 5. Theopathy:—*First.* Banquets, music, &c., effeminacy, and their insufficiency. *Second.* 'Beds of hyacinth and roses, where young

Adonis oft reposes;' 'Fortunate Isles;' 'The pagan Elysium,' &c.; poetical pictures; antiquity as pleasing to the fancy; their emptiness; madness, &c. *Third.* Warriors, Poets; some famous yet, more forgotten; their fame or oblivion now alike indifferent; pride, vanity, &c. *Fourth.* All manner of pitiable stories, in Spenser-like verse; love; friendship, relationship, &c. *Fifth.* Hermits; Christ and his apostles; martyrs; heaven, &c. An imagination like yours, from these scanty hints, may expand into a thousand great ideas, if indeed you at all comprehend my scheme, which I scarce do myself.

"*Monday morn.*—'A London letter—Ninepence halfpenny!' Look you, master poet, I have remorse as well as another man, and my bowels can sound upon occasion. But I must put you to this charge, for I cannot keep back my protest, however ineffectual, against the annexing your latter lines to those former—this putting of new wine into old bottles. This my duty done, I will cease from writing till you invent some more reasonable mode of conveyance. Well may the 'ragged followers of the Nine!' set up for flocci-nauci-what-do-you-call-'em-ists! and I do not wonder that in their splendid visions of Utopias in America, they protest against the admission of those *yellow*-complexioned, *copper*-coloured, *white*-livered gentlemen, who never prove themselves their friends! Don't you think your verses on a 'Young Ass' too trivial a companion for the 'Religious Musings?'—'scoundrel monarch,' alter that; and the 'Man of Ross' is scarce admissible, as it now stands, curtailed of its fairer half: reclaim its property from the 'Chatterton,' which it does but encumber, and it will be a rich little poem. I hope you expunge great part of the old notes in the new edition: that, in particular, most barefaced, unfounded, impudent assertion, that Mr. Rogers is indebted for his story to Loch Lomond, a poem by Bruce! I have read the latter. I scarce think you have. Scarce anything is common to them both. The author of the 'Pleasures of Memory' was somewhat hurt, Dyer says, by the accusation of unoriginality. He never saw the poem. I long to read your poem on Burns—I retain so indistinct a memory of it. In what shape and how does it come into public? As you leave off writing poetry till you finish your Hymns, I suppose you print, now, all you have got by you. You have scarce enough unprinted to make a second volume with Lloyd? Tell me all about it. What is become of Cowper? Lloyd told me of some verses on his

mother. If you have them by you, pray send 'em me. I do so love him! Never mind their merit. May be *I* may like 'em, as your taste and mine do not always exactly *identify*. Yours, C. LAMB."

Soon after the date to this letter, death released the father from his state of imbecility and the son from his wearisome duties. With his life, the annuity he had derived from the old bencher ceased; while the aunt continued to linger still with Lamb in his cheerless lodging. His sister still remained in confinement in the asylum to which she had been consigned on her mother's death—perfectly sensible and calm—and he was passionately desirous of obtaining her liberty. The surviving members of the family, especially his brother John, who enjoyed a fair income in the South Sea House, opposed her discharge; and painful doubts were suggested by the authorities of the parish, where the terrible occurrence happened, whether they were not bound to institute proceedings, which must have placed her for life at the disposition of the Crown, especially as no medical assurance could be given against the probable recurrence of dangerous frenzy. But Charles came to her deliverance; he satisfied all the parties who had power to oppose her release, by his solemn engagement that he would take her under his care for life; and he kept his word. Whether any communication with the Home Secretary occurred before her release, I have been unable to ascertain; it was the impression of Mr. Lloyd, from whom my own knowledge of the circumstances, which the letters do not ascertain, was derived, that a communication took place, on which a similar pledge was given; at all events, the result was, that she left the asylum and took up her abode for life with her brother Charles. For her sake, at the same time, he abandoned all thoughts of love and marriage; and with an income of scarcely more than £100 a year, derived from his clerkship, aided for a little while by the old aunt's small annuity, set out on the journey of life at twenty-two years of age, cheerfully, with his beloved companion, endeared to him the more by her strange calamity, and the constant apprehension of a recurrence of the malady which had caused it!

CHAPTER III.

Letters to Coleridge and Manning in Lamb's first years of life with his sister.—1797 to 1800.

THE anxieties of Lamb's new position were assuaged during the spring of 1797 by frequent communications with Coleridge respecting the anticipated volume, and by some additions to his own share in its pages. He was also cheered by the company of Lloyd, who, having resided for a few months with Coleridge, at Stowey, came to London in some perplexity as to his future course. Of this visit Lamb speaks in the following letter, probably written in January. It contains some verses expressive of his delight at Lloyd's visit, which, although afterward inserted in the volume, are so well fitted to their frame-work of prose, and so indicative of the feelings of the writer at this crisis of his life, that I may be excused for presenting them with the context.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"1797.

"Dear Col,—You have learned by this time, with surprise, no doubt, that Lloyd is with me in town. The emotions I felt on his coming so unlooked-for, are not ill expressed in what follows, and what, if you do not object to them as too personal, and to the world obscure, or otherwise wanting in worth, I should wish to make a part of our little volume. I shall be sorry if that volume comes out, as it necessarily must do, unless you print those very schoolboy-ish verses I sent you on not getting leave to come down to Bristol last summer. I say I shall be sorry that I have addressed you in nothing which can appear in our joint volume; so frequently, so habitually, as you dwell in my thoughts, 'tis some wonder those thoughts came never yet in contact with a poetical mood. But you dwell in my heart of hearts, and I love you in all the naked honesty of prose. God bless you, and all your little domestic circle—my tenderest remembrances to your beloved Sara, and a smile and a kiss from me to your dear dear little David Hartley. The verses I refer to above, slightly amended, I

have sent (forgetting to ask your leave, tho' indeed I gave them only your initials) to the Monthly Magazine, where they may possibly appear next month, and where I hope to recognize your poem on Burns.

TO CHARLES LLOYD, AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR.

Alone, obscure, without a friend,
A cheerless, solitary thing,
Why seeks my Lloyd the stranger out?
What offering can the stranger bring

Of social scenes, home-bred delights,
That him in aught compensate may
For Stowey's pleasant winter nights,
For loves and friendships far away,

In brief oblivion to forego
Friends, such as thine, so justly dear
And be awhile with me content
To stay, a kindly loiterer, here?

For this a gleam of random joy
Hath flush'd my unaccustom'd cheek;
And, with an o'er-charg'd bursting heart,
I feel the thanks I cannot speak.

O! sweet are all the Muse's lays,
And sweet the charm of matin bird—
'Twas long, since these estranged ears
The sweeter voice of friend had heard.

The voice hath spoke: the pleasant sounds
In memory's ear, in after time
Shall live, to sometimes rouse a tear,
And sometimes prompt an honest rhyme.

For when the transient charm is fled,
And when the little week is o'er,
To cheerless, friendless solitude
When I return, as heretofore—

Long, long, within my aching heart
The grateful sense shall cherish'd be;
I'll think less meanly of myself,
That Lloyd will sometimes think on me.

"O Coleridge, would to God you were in London with us, or we at Stowey with you all. Lloyd takes up his abode at the Bull and Mouth Inn; the Cat and Salutation would have had a charm more forcible for me. *O noctes cœnæque Deûm!* Anglice—Welch rabbits, punch, and poesy. Should you be induced to publish those very schoolboy-ish verses, print 'em as they will occur, if at all, in the Monthly Magazine; yet I should feel ashamed that to you I wrote nothing better: but they are too personal, and almost trifling and obscure withal. Some lines of mine to Cowper were in last Monthly Magazine; they have not body of thought enough to plead for the retaining of 'em. My sister's kind love to you all. C. LAMB."

It would seem, from the following fragment of a letter of 7th April, 1797, that Lamb, at first, took a small lodging for his sister apart from his own, but soon to be for life united.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"By the way, Lloyd may have told you about my sister. I told him. If not, I have taken her out of her confinement, and taken a room for her at Hackney, and spend my Sundays, holidays, &c., with her. She boards herself. In one little half year's illness, and in such an illness, of such a nature and of such consequences! to get her out into the world again, with a prospect of her never being so ill again—this is to be ranked not among the common blessings of Providence."

The next letter to Coleridge begins with a transcript of Lamb's poem, entitled "A Vision of Repentance," which was inserted in the *Addenda* to the volume, and is preserved among his collected poems, and thus proceeds:

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"April 15th, 1797.

"The above you will please to print immediately before the blank verse fragments. Tell me if you like it. I fear the latter half is unequal to the former, in parts of which I think you will discover a delicacy of pencilling not quite un-Spenser-like. The latter half aims at the *measure*, but has failed to attain the *poetry* of Milton in his 'Comus,' and Fletcher in that exquisite thing ycleped the 'Faithful Shepherdess,' where they both use eight-syllable lines. But this latter half was finished in great haste, and as a task, not from that impulse which affects the name of inspiration.

"By the way, I have lit upon Fairfax's 'Godfrey of Bullen,' for half a crown. Rejoice with me.

"Poor dear Lloyd! I had a letter from him yesterday; his state of mind is truly alarming. He has, by his own confession, kept a letter of mine unopened three weeks, afraid, he says, to open it, lest I should speak upbraidingly to him; and yet this very letter of mine was in answer to one wherein he informed me that an alarming illness had alone prevented him from writing. You will pray with me, I know, for his recovery, for surely, Coleridge, an exquisiteness of feeling like this must border on derangement.

But I love him more and more, and will not give up the hope of his speedy recovery, as he tells me he is under Dr. Darwin's regimen.*

"God bless us all, and shield us from insanity, which is 'the sorest malady of all.'

"My kind love to your wife and child. C. LAMB.

"Pray write now."

As summer advanced, Lamb discerned a hope of compensation for the disappointment of last year, by a visit to Coleridge, and thus expresses his wishes:

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"I discern a possibility of my paying you a visit next week. May I, can I, shall I, come as soon? Have you *room* for me, *leisure* for me, and are you all pretty well? Tell me all this honestly—immediately. And by what *day*-coach could I come soonest and nearest to Stowey? A few months hence may suit you better; certainly me, as well. If so, say so. I long, I yearn, with all the longings of a child do I desire to see you, to come among you—to see the young philosopher, to thank Sara for her last year's invitation in person—to read your tragedy—to read over together our little book—to breathe fresh air—to revive in me vivid images of 'Salutation scenery.' There is a sort of sacrilege in my letting such ideas slip out of my mind and memory. Still that R—— remaineth—a thorn in the side of Hope, when she would lean toward Stowey. Here I will leave off, for I dislike to fill up this paper, which involves a question so connected with my heart and soul, with meaner matter or subjects to me less interesting. I can talk, as I can think, nothing else. *Thursday.*

"C. LAMB."

The visit was enjoyed; the book was published; and Lamb was once more left to the daily labours of the India House and the unceasing anxieties of his home. His feelings, on the recurrence of the season, which had, last year, been darkened by his terrible calamity, will be understood

* Poor Charles Lloyd! These apprehensions were sadly realized. Delusions of the most melancholy kind thickened over his latter days, yet left his admirable intellect free for the finest processes of severe reasoning. At a time when, like Cowper, he believed himself the especial subject of Divine wrath, he could bear his part in the most subtle disquisition on questions of religion, morals, and poetry, with the nicest accuracy of perception and the most exemplary candour; and, after an argument of hours, revert, with a faint smile, to his own despair!

from the first of two pieces of blank verse, which fill the two first sheets of a letter to Coleridge, written under an apprehension of some neglect on the part of his friend, which had its cause in no estrangement of Coleridge's affections, but in the vicissitudes of the imaginative philosopher's fortune and the constancy of his day-dreamings.

WRITTEN A TWELVEMONTH AFTER THE EVENTS.

[*Friday next, Coleridge, is the day on which my mother died.*]

Alas! how am I chang'd! where be the tears,
The sobs, and forc'd suspensions of the breath,
And all the dull desertions of the heart
With which I hung o'er my dear mother's corse:
Where be the blest subsidings of the storm
Within; the sweet resignedness of hope
Drawn heavenward, and strength of filial love,
In which I bow'd me to my Father's will?
My God and my Redeemer, keep not thou
My heart in brute and sensual thanklessness
Seal'd up, oblivious ever of that dear grace,
And health restored to my long-loved friend.
Long loved, and worthy known! Thou didst not keep
Her soul in death. O keep not now, my Lord,
Thy servants in far worse—in spiritual death
And darkness—blacker than those feared shadows
O' the valley all must tread. Lend us thy balms,
Thou dear Physician of the sin-sick soul,
And heal our cleansed bosoms of the wounds
With which the world hath pierced us thro' and thro'!
Give us new flesh, new birth; Elect of heaven
May we become, in thine election sure
Contain'd, and to one purpose steadfast drawn—
Our souls' salvation.

Thou and I, dear friend,
With filial recognition sweet, shall know
One day the face of our dear mother in heaven,
And her remember'd looks of love shall greet
With answering looks of love, her placid smiles
Meet with a smile as placid, and her hand
With drops of fondness wet, nor fear repulse.*

Be witness for me, Lord, I do not ask
Those days of vanity to return again
(Not fitting me to ask, nor thee to give),
Vain loves, and "wanderings with a fair-hair'd maid"
(Child of the dust as I am), who so long
My foolish heart steep'd in idolatry,
And creature-loves. Forgive it, O my Maker!
If in a mood of grief, I sin almost
In sometimes brooding on the days long past
(And from the grave of time wishing them back),
Days of a mother's fondness to her child—
Her little one! Oh, where be now those sports
And infant play-games? Where the joyous troops
Of children, and the haunts I did so love?
O my companions! O ye loved names
Of friend, or playmate dear, gone are ye now.

* [Note in the margin of MS.] "This is almost literal from a letter of my sister's—less than a year ago."

Gone divers ways; to honour and credit some;
And some, I fear, to ignominy and shame!*
I only am left, with unavailing grief
One parent dead to mourn, and see one live
Of all life's joys bereft, and desolate:
Am left, with a few friends, and one above
The rest, found faithful in a length of years,
Contented as I may, to bear me on,
T', the not unpeaceful evening of a day
Made black by morning storms.

"The following I wrote when I had returned from C. Lloyd, leaving him behind at Burton, with Southey. To understand some of it, you must remember that at that time he was very much perplexed in mind.

A stranger, and alone, I pass'd those scenes
We pass'd so late together; and my heart
Felt something like desertion, as I look'd
Around me, and the pleasant voice of friend
Was absent, and the cordial look was there
No more, to smile on me. I thought on Lloyd—
All he had been to me! And now I go
Again to mingle with a world impure;
With men who make a mock of holy things,
Mistaken, and of man's best hope think scorn.
The world does much to warp the heart of man;
And I may sometimes join its idiot laugh:
Of this I now complain not. Deal with me,
Omniscient Father, as thou judgest best,
And in *thy* season soften thou my heart.
I pray not for myself: I pray for him
Whose soul is sore perplexed. Shine thou on him,
Father of lights! and in the difficult paths
Make plain his way before him: his own thoughts
May he not think—his own ends not pursue—
So shall he best perform thy will on earth.
Greatest and Best, thy will be ever ours!

"The former of these poems I wrote with unusual celerity t'other morning at office. I expect you to like it better than any thing of mine; Lloyd does, and I do myself.

"You use Lloyd very ill, never writing to him. I tell you again that his is not a mind with which you should play tricks. He deserves more tenderness from you.

"For myself, I must spoil a little passage of Beaumont and Fletcher to adapt it to my feelings:

'I am prouder
That I was once your friend, tho' now forgot,
Than to have had another true to me.'

If you don't write to me now, as I told Lloyd, I shall get angry, and call you hard names—Manchineel, and I don't know what else. I wish you would send me my great-coat. The snow and the rain season is at hand, and I have but a

* [Note in the margin of MS.] "Alluding to some of my old playfellows being, literally, 'on the town,' and some otherwise wretched."

wretched old coat, once my father's, to keep 'em off, and that is transitory.

'When time drives flocks from field to fold,
When ways grow foul and blood gets cold,'

I shall remember where I left my coat. Meet emblem wilt thou be, old Winter, of a friend's neglect—cold, cold, cold! C. LAMB."

The following lines, which Lamb transmitted to his new friend Southey, bespeak the remarkable serenity with which, when the first shock was over and the duties of life-long love arranged, Lamb was able to contemplate the victim of his sister's frenzy:*

Thou shouldst have longer lived, and to the grave
Have peacefully gone down in full old age;
Thy children would have tended thy gray hairs;
We might have sat, as we have often done,
By our fireside, and talk'd whole nights away,
Old time, old friends, and old events recalling,
With many a circumstance of trivial note,
To memory dear, and of importance grown.
How shall we tell them in a stranger's ear!

A wayward son ofttimes was I to thee,
And yet, in all our little bickerings,
Domestic jars, there was I know not what
Of tender feeling that were ill exchang'd
For this world's chilling friendships, and their smiles
Familiar, whom the heart calls strangers all.

A heavy lot hath he, most wretched man,
Who lives the last of all his family!
He looks around him, and his eye discerns
The face of the stranger, and his heart is sick.
Man of the world, what canst thou do for him?
Wealth is a burden which he could not bear;
Mirth a strange crime, the which he dares not act;
And generous wines no cordial to his soul.
For wounds like his, Christ is the only cure.
Go! preach thou to him of a world to come,
Where friends shall meet and know each other's face!
Say less than this, and say it to the winds.

An addition to Lamb's household cares is thus mentioned in a letter

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"December 10th, 1797.

"In truth, Coleridge, I am perplexed, and at times almost cast down. I am beset with perplexities. The old hag of

* These lines are now first introduced in this edition, becoming known to the editor by their publication in the first volume of "Southey's Life and Correspondence," p. 325, where they appear in a letter from Southey to Mr. Wynn. The biographer courteously adds that they would have been sent to the editor, but that they were not observed till after the publication of the first edition of these Memorials.

a wealthy relation, who took my aunt off our hands in the beginning of trouble, has found out that she is 'indolent and mulish,' I quote her own words, and that her attachment to us is so strong that she can never be happy apart. The lady, with delicate irony, remarks, that if I am not an hypocrite, I shall rejoice to receive her again; and that it will be a means of making me more fond of home to have so dear a friend to come home to! The fact is, she is jealous of my aunt's bestowing any kind recollections on us while she enjoys the patronage of her roof. She says she finds it inconsistent with her own 'ease and tranquillity' to keep her any longer; and, in fine, summons me to fetch her home. Now, much as I should rejoice to transplant the poor old creature from the chilling air of such patronage, yet I know how straitened we are already, how unable already to answer any demand which sickness or any extraordinary expense may make. I know this, and all unused as I am to struggle with perplexities, I am somewhat nonplussed, to say no worse. This prevents me from a thorough relish of what Lloyd's kindness and your's have furnished me with. I thank you, though, from my heart, and feel myself not quite alone in the earth."

In 1798, Coleridge seemed to attain a settled home by accepting an invitation to become the minister of a Unitarian congregation at Shrewsbury; a hope of short duration. The following letter was addressed by Lamb to him at this time as "S. T. Coleridge"—as if the Mr. were dropped and the "Reverend" not quite adopted—"at the Reverend A. Rowe's, Shrewsbury, Shropshire." The tables are turned here; Lamb, instead of accusing Coleridge of neglect, takes the charge to himself, in deep humility of spirit, and regards the effect of Miss Lamb's renewed illnesses on his mind as inducing indifference, with an affecting self-jealousy.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"January 28th, 1798.

"You have writ me many kind letters, and I have answered none of them. I don't deserve your attentions. An unnatural indifference has been creeping on me since my last misfortunes, or I should have seized the first opening of a correspondence with *you*. To you I owe much, under God. In my brief acquaintance with you in London, your conversations won me to the better cause, and rescued me from the polluting spirit of the world. I might have been

a worthless character without you; as it is, I do possess a certain improvable portion of devotional feelings, tho' when I view myself in the light of divine truth, and not according to the common measures of human judgment, I am altogether corrupt and sinful. This is no cant. I am very sincere.

"These last afflictions, Coleridge, have failed to soften and bend my will. They found me unprepared. My former calamities produced in me a spirit of humility and a spirit of prayer. I thought they had sufficiently disciplined me; but the event ought to humble me; if God's judgments now fail to take away from me the heart of stone, what more grievous trials ought I not to expect? I have been very querulous, impatient under the rod—full of little jealousies and heart-burnings. I had well nigh quarrelled with Charles Lloyd, and for no other reason, I believe, than that the good creature did all he could to make me happy. The truth is, I thought he tried to force my mind from its natural and proper bent; he continually wished me to be from home; he was drawing me *from* the consideration of my poor dear Mary's situation, rather than assisting me to gain a proper view of it with religious consolations. I wanted to be left to the tendency of my own mind, in a solitary state, which, in times past, I knew had led to quietness and a patient bearing of the yoke. He was hurt that I was not more constantly with him, but he was living with White, a man to whom I had never been accustomed to impart my *dearest feelings*, tho' from long habits of friendliness, and many a social and good quality, I loved him very much. I met company there sometimes—indiscriminate company. Any society almost, when I am in affliction, is sorely painful to me. I seem to breathe more freely, to think more collectedly, to feel more properly and calmly, when alone. All these things the good creature did with the kindest intentions in the world, but they produced in me nothing but soreness and discontent. I became, as he complained, 'jaundiced' towards him . . . but he has forgiven me, and his smile, I hope, will draw all such humours from me. I am recovering, God be praised for it, a healthiness of mind, something like calmness; but I want more religion—I am jealous of human helps and leaning-places. I rejoice in your good fortunes. May God at the last settle you! You have had many and painful trials; humanly speaking, they are going to end; but we should rather pray that discipline may attend us thro' the

whole of our lives. . . . A careless and a dissolute spirit has advanced upon *me* with large strides—pray God that my present afflictions may be sanctified to me! Mary is recovering; but I see no opening yet of a situation for her. Your invitation went to my very heart; but you have a power of exciting interest, of leading all hearts captive, too forcible to admit of Mary's being with you. I consider her as perpetually on the brink of madness; I think you would almost make her dance within an inch of the precipice; she must be with duller fancies and cooler intellects. I know a young man of this description, who has suited her these twenty years, and may live to do so still, if we are one day restored to each other. In answer to your suggestions of occupation for me, I must say that I do not think my capacity altogether suited for disquisitions of that kind. . . . I have read little, I have a very weak memory, and retain little of what I read; am unused to compositions in which any methodizing is required; but I thank you sincerely for the hint, and shall receive it as far as I am able, that is, endeavour to engage my mind in some constant and innocent pursuit. I know my capacities better than you do.

"Accept my kindest love, and believe me yours, as ever.

"C. L."

At this time, the only literary man whom Lamb knew in London was George Dyer, who had been noted as an accomplished scholar, in Lamb's early childhood, at Christ's Hospital. For him Lamb cherished all the esteem that his guileless simplicity of character and gentleness of nature could inspire: in these qualities the friends were akin; but no two men could be more opposite than they were to each other in intellectual qualifications and tastes—Lamb, in all things original, and rejoicing in the quaint, the strange, the extravagant; Dyer, the quintessence of learned commonplace; Lamb wildly catching the most evanescent spirit of wit and poetry; Dyer the wondering disciple of their established forms. Dyer officiated as a revering high-priest at the altar of the Muses—such as they were in the staid, antiquated trim of the closing years of the eighteenth century, before they formed sentimental attachments in Germany, or flirted with revolutionary France, or renewed their youth by drinking the spirit of the Lakes. Lamb esteemed and loved him so well, that he felt himself entitled to make sport with his peculiarities; but it was as Fielding might sport with his own idea of Parson

Adams; or Goldsmith with his Dr. Primrose. The following passage occurs in a letter of 28th November, 1798, addressed

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"I showed my 'Witch,' and 'Dying Lover,' to Dyer last night, but George could not comprehend how that could be poetry which did not go upon ten feet, as George and his predecessors had taught it to do; so George read me some lectures on the distinguishing qualities of the Ode, the Epigram, and the Epic, and went home to illustrate his doctrine by correcting a proof-sheet of his own Lyrics. George writes odes where the rhymes, like fashionable man and wife, keep a comfortable distance of six or eight lines apart, and calls that 'observing the laws of verse.' George tells you, before he recites, that you must listen with great attention, or you'll miss the rhymes. I did so, and found them pretty exact. George, speaking of the dead Ossian, exclaimeth, 'Dark are the poet's eyes.' I humbly represented to him that his own eyes were dark, and many a living bard's besides, and recommended 'Closed are the poet's eyes.' But that would not do. I found there was an antithesis between the darkness of his eyes and the splendour of his genius; and I acquiesced."

The following passage on the same subject occurs in a letter about the same time, addressed

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Now I am on the subject of poetry, I must announce to you, who, doubtless, in your remote part of the island, have not heard tidings of so great a blessing, that George Dyer hath prepared two ponderous volumes full of poetry and criticism. They impend over the town and are threatened to fall in the winter. The first volume contains every sort of poetry, except personal satire, which George, in his truly original prospectus, renounceth for ever, whimsically foisting the intention in between the price of his book and the proposed number of subscribers. (If I can, I will get you a copy of his *handbill*.) He has tried his *vein* in every species besides—the Spenserian, Thomsonian, Masonic, and Akensidish more especially. The second volume is all criticism; wherein he demonstrates to the entire satisfaction of the literary world, in a way that must silence all reply for ever, that the Pastoral was introduced by Theoc-

ritus, and polished by Virgil and Pope—that Gray and Mason (who always hunt in couples in George's brain) have a good deal of poetical fire and true lyric genius—that Cowley was ruined by excess of wit (a warning to all moderns)—that Charles Lloyd, Charles Lamb, and William Wordsworth, in later days, have struck the true chords of poesy. O George, George! with a head uniformly wrong, and a heart uniformly right, that I had power and might equal to my wishes: then would I call the gentry of thy native island, and they should come in troops, flocking at the sound of thy prospectus-trumpet, and crowding who shall be first to stand in thy list of subscribers! I can only put twelve shillings into thy pocket (which, I will answer for them, will not stick there long), out of a pocket almost as bare as thine. Is it not a pity so much fine writing should be erased? But, to tell the truth, I began to scent that I was getting into that sort of style which Longinus and Dionysius Halicarnassus fitly call 'the affected.'"

Lamb's apprehensions of the recurrence of his sister's malady were soon realized. An old maid-servant who assisted her in the lodging became ill; Miss Lamb incessantly watched the death-bed; and just as the poor creature died, was again seized with madness. Lamb placed her under medical care; and, left alone, wrote the following short and miserable letter:

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"May 12th, 1800.

"My dear Coleridge,—I don't know why I write, except from the propensity misery has to tell her griefs. Hetty died on Friday night, about eleven o'clock, after eight days' illness; Mary, in consequence of fatigue and anxiety, is fallen ill again, and I was obliged to remove her yesterday. I am left alone in a house with nothing but Hetty's dead body to keep me company. To-morrow I bury her, and then I shall be quite alone, with nothing but a cat, to remind me that the house has been full of living beings like myself. My heart is quite sunk, and I don't know where to look for relief. Mary will get better again, but her constantly being liable to such relapses is dreadful; nor is it the least of our evils that her case and all our story is so well known around us. We are in a manner *marked*. Excuse my troubling you, but I have nobody by me to speak to me. I slept out last night, not being able to endure the change

and the stillness. But I did not sleep well, and I must come back to my own bed. I am going to try and get a friend to come and be with me to-morrow. I am completely shipwrecked. My head is quite bad. I almost wish that Mary were dead. God bless you. Love to Sara and Hartley.—*Monday.* C. LAMB."

The prospect of obtaining a residence more suited to the peculiar exigencies of his situation than that which he then occupied at Pentonville, gave Lamb comfort, which he expressed in the following short letter:

TO MR. MANNING.

"1800.

"Dear Manning,—I feel myself unable to thank you sufficiently for your kind letter. It was doubly acceptable to me, both for the choice poetry and the kind, honest prose which it contained. It was just such a letter as I should have expected from Manning.

"I am in much better spirits than when I wrote last. I have had a very eligible offer to lodge with a friend in town. He will have rooms to let at midsummer, by which time I hope my sister will be well enough to join me. It is a great object to me to live in town, where we shall be much more *private*, and to quit a house and a neighbourhood where poor Mary's disorder, so frequently recurring, has made us a sort of marked people. We can be nowhere private except in the midst of London. We shall be in a family where we visit very frequently; only my landlord and I have not yet come to a conclusion. He has a partner to consult. I am still on the tremble, for I do not know where we could go into lodgings that would not be, in many respects, highly exceptionable. Only God send Mary well again, and I hope all will be well! The prospect, such as it is, has made me quite happy. I have just time to tell you of it, as I know it will give you pleasure. Farewell. C. LAMB."

This hope was accomplished, as appears from the following letter:

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"1800.

"Dear Coleridge,—Soon after I wrote to you last, an offer was made me by Gutch (you must remember him, at Christ's—you saw him, slightly, one day with Thomson at

ouse)—to come and lodge with him, at his house in ampton Buildings, Chancery Lane. This was a very rtable offer to me, the rooms being at a reasonable nd including the use of an old servant, besides being tely preferable to ordinary lodgings *in our case*, as you perceive. As Gutch knew all our story and the per- l liability to a recurrence in my sister's disorder, prob- o the end of her life, I certainly think the offer very ous and very friendly. I have got three rooms (in- g servant) under £34 a year. Here I soon found f at home; and here, in six weeks after, Mary was enough to join me. So we are once more settled. I fraid we are not placed out of the reach of future in- tions. But I am determined to take what snatches asure we can between the acts of our distressful a. . . . I have passed two days at Oxford, on a visit I have long put off, to Gutch's family. The sight of odleian Library, and, above all, a fine bust of Bishop r, at All Souls', were particularly gratifying to me; kily, it was not a family where I could take Mary with nd I am afraid there is something of dishonesty in leasures I take without *her*. She never goes anywhere. not know what I can add to this letter. I hope you etter by this time; and I desire to be affectionately mbered to Sarah and Hartley.

expected before this to have had tidings of another philosopher. Lloyd's wife is on the point of favour- e world.

lave you seen the new edition of Burns? his posthu- works and letters? I have only been able to procure rst volume, which contains his life—very confusedly adly written, and interspersed with dull pathological *edical* discussions. It is written by a Dr. Currie. Do now the well-meaning doctor? Alas, *ne sutor ultra lam!*

hope to hear again from you very soon. Godwin is to Ireland on a visit to Grattan. Before he went I d much time with him, and he has showed me partic- attention: N.B.—A thing I much like. Your books ll safe: only I have not thought it necessary to fetch your last batch, which I understand are at Johnson's, ookseller, who has got quite as much room, and will as much care of them as myself—and you can send for immediately from him.

wish you would advert to a letter I sent you at Grass- L. I.—17

mere about Christabel, and comply with my request contained therein.

"Love to all friends round Skiddaw. C. Lamb."

CHAPTER IV.

Miscellaneous Letters to Manning, Coleridge, and Wordsworth.—1800 to 1805.

It would seem from the letters of 1800 that the natural determination of Lamb "to take what pleasure he could between the acts of his distressful drama" had led him into a wider circle of companionship, and had prompted sallies of wilder and broader mirth, which afterward softened into delicacy, retaining all its whim. The following passage, which concludes a letter to Manning, else occupied with merely personal details, proves that his apprehensions for the diminution of his reverence for sacred things were not wholly unfounded, while amid its grotesque expressions may be discerned the repugnance to the philosophical infidelity of some of his companions he retained through life. The passage may perhaps be regarded as a sort of desperate compromise between a wild gaiety and religious impressions obscured but not effaced; and intimating his disapprobation of infidelity, with a melancholy sense of his own unworthiness seriously to express it.

TO MR. MANNING.

"Coleridge inquires after you pretty often. I wish to be the pander to bring you together again once before I die. When we die, you and I must part: the sheep, you know, take the right hand, and the goats the left. Stripped of its allegory, you must know, the sheep are *I*, and the Apostles, and the Martyrs, and the Popes, and Bishop Taylor, and Bishop Horsley, and Coleridge, &c., &c.; the goats are the Atheists, and the Adulterers, and dumb dogs, and Godwin, and M——g, and that Thyestæan crew—yaw! how my saintship sickens at the idea!

"You shall have my play and the Falstaff letters in a day or two. I will write to Lloyd by this day's post.

"God bless you, Manning. Take my trifling *as trifling:* and believe me sincerely and deeply your well-wisher and friend. C. Lamb."

In the following letter Lamb's fantastic spirits find scope freely, though in all kindness, in the peculiarities of the learned and good George Dyer:

TO MR. MANNING.

"August 22d, 1800.

"Dear Manning,—You needed not imagine any apology necessary. Your fine hare and fine birds (which just now are dangling by our kitchen blaze) discourse most eloquent music in your justification. You just nicked my palate; for, with all due decorum and leave may it be spoken, my worship hath taken physic to-day, and, being low and puling, requireth to be pampered. Foh! how beautiful and strong those buttered onions come to my nose. For, you must know, we extract a divine spirit of gravy from these materials, which, duly compounded with a consistence of bread and cream (y'clept bread-sauce), each to each, giving double grace, do mutually illustrate and set off (as skilful gold-foils to rare jewels) your partridge, pheasant, woodcock, snipe, teal, widgeon, and the other lesser daughters of the ark. My friendship, struggling with my carnal and fleshly prudence (which suggests that a bird a man is the proper allotment in such cases), yearneth sometimes to have thee here to pick a wing or so. I question if your Norfolk sauces match our London culinaric.

"George Dyer has introduced me to the table of an agreeable old gentleman, Dr. A——, who gives hot legs of mutton and grape pies at his sylvan lodge at Isleworth, where, in the middle of a street, he has shot up a wall most preposterously before his small dwelling, which, with the circumstance of his taking several panes of glass out of bedroom windows (for air), causeth his neighbours to speculate strangely on the state of the good man's pericranicks. Plainly, he lives under the reputation of being deranged. George does not mind this circumstance; he rather likes him the better for it. The Doctor, in his pursuits, joins agricultural to poetical science, and has set George's brains mad about the old Scotch writers, Barbour, Douglas's Æneid, Blind Harry, &c. We returned home in a return post-chaise (having dined with the Doctor), and George kept wondering and wondering, for eight or nine turnpike miles, what was the name, and striving to recollect the name of a poet anterior to Barbour. I begged to know what was remaining of his works. 'There is nothing *extant* of his works, sir, but, by all accounts, he seems to have

been a fine genius.' This fine genius, without any thing to show for it, or any title beyond George's courtesy, without even a name, and Barbour, and Douglas, and Blind Harry now are the predominant sounds in George's pia mater, and their buzzings exclude politics, criticism, and algebra—the late lords of that illustrious lumber-room. Mark, he has never read any of these bucks, but is impatient till he reads them *all* at the Doctor's suggestion. Poor Dyer! his friends should be careful what sparks they let fall into such inflammable matter.

"Could I have my will of the heathen, I would lock him up from all access of new ideas; I would exclude all critics that would not swear me first (upon their Virgil) that they would feed him with nothing but the old, safe, familiar notions and sounds—the rightful aborigines of his brain—Gray, Akenside, and Mason. In these sounds, reiterated as often as possible, there could be nothing painful, nothing distracting.

"God bless me! here are the birds, smoking hot!

"All that is gross and unspiritual in me rises at the sight.

"Avaunt friendship, and all memory of absent friends!

"C. LAMB."

In the following letter the exciting subjects of Dr. A—— and Dyer are further played on:

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"August 26th, 1800.

"George Dyer is the only literary character I am happily acquainted with; the oftener I see him the more deeply I admire him. He is goodness itself. If I could but calculate the precise date of his death, I would write a novel on purpose to make George the hero. I could hit him off to a hair.* George brought a Dr. A—— to see me. The Doctor is a very pleasant old man, a great genius for agriculture, one that ties his breeches-knees with packthread, and boasts of having had disappointments from ministers. The Doctor happened to mention an epic poem by one Wilkie, called the 'Epigoniad,' in which he assured us there is not one tolerable line from beginning to end, but all the char-

* This passage, thus far, is printed in the former volumes; the remainder was then suppressed (with other passages *now* for the first time published) relating to Mr. Dyer, lest they should give pain to that excellent person then living.

acters, incidents, &c., verbally copied from *Homer*. George, who had been sitting quite inattentive to the Doctor's criticism, no sooner heard the sound of *Homer* strike his pericranicks, than up he gets, and declares he must see that poem immediately: where was it to be had? An epic poem of 8000 lines, and *he* not hear of it! There must be some things good in it, and it was necessary he should see it, for he had touched pretty deeply upon that subject in his criticisms on the Epic. George has touched pretty deeply upon the Lyric, I find; he has also prepared a dissertation on the Drama, and the comparison of the English and German theatres. As I rather doubted his competency to do the latter, knowing that his peculiar *turn* lies in the lyric species of composition, I questioned George what English plays he had read. I found that he *had* read Shakspeare (whom he calls an original, but irregular genius), but it was a good while ago; and he has dipped into Rowe and Otway, I suppose having found their names in 'Johnson's Lives' at full length; and upon this slender ground he has undertaken the task. He never seemed even to have heard of Fletcher, Ford, Marlowe, Massinger, and the worthies of Dodsley's Collection; but he is to read all these, to prepare him for bringing out his 'Parallel' in the winter. I find he is also determined to vindicate Poetry from the shackles which Aristotle and some others have imposed upon it, which is very good-natured of him, and very necessary just now! Now I am *touching* so *deeply* upon poetry, can I forget that I have just received from D—— a magnificent copy of his Guinea Epic. Four-and-twenty Books to read in the dog-days! I got as far as the Mad Monk the first day, and fainted. Mr. D——'s genius strongly points him to the *Pastoral*, but his inclinations divert him perpetually from his calling. He imitates Southey, as Rowe did Shakspeare, with his 'Good-morrow to ye, good master Lieutenant.' Instead of *a* man, *a* woman, *a* daughter, he constantly writes one a man, one a woman, one his daughter. Instead of *the* king, *the* hero, he constantly writes he the king, he the hero—two flowers of rhetoric palpably from the 'Joan.' But Mr. D—— soars a higher pitch; and when he *is* original, it is in a most original way indeed. His terrific scenes are indefatigable. Serpents, asps, spiders, ghosts, dead bodies, staircases made of nothing, with adders' tongues for bannisters—Good Heaven! what a brain he must have. He puts as many plums in his pudding as my grandmother used to do; and then

his emerging from hell's horrors into light, and treading on pure flats of this earth—for twenty-three Books together!

"C. L."

The following letter, obviously written about the same time, pursues the same theme. There is some irritation in it; but even that is curious enough to prevent the excision of the reproduced passages:

TO MR. MANNING.

"1800.

"Dear Manning,—I am going to ask a favour of you, and am at a loss how to do it in the most delicate manner. For this purpose I have been looking into Pliny's Letters, who is noted to have had the best grace in begging of all the ancients (I read him in the elegant translation of Mr. Melmoth), but not finding any case there exactly similar with mine, I am constrained to beg in my own barbarian way. To come to the point, then, and hasten into the middle of things: have you a copy of your Algebra to give away? I do not ask it for myself; I have too much reverence for the Black Arts ever to approach thy circle, illustrious Trismegist! But that worthy man and excellent poet, George Dyer, made me a visit yesternight, on purpose to borrow one, supposing, rationally enough, I must say, that you had made me a present of one before this, the omission of which I take to have proceeded only from negligence; but it is a fault. I could lend him no assistance. You must know he is just now diverted from the pursuit of the BELL LETTERS by a paradox, which he has heard his friend Frend* (that learned mathematician) maintain, that the negative quantities of mathematicians were *meræ nugæ*, things scarcely *in rerum naturâ*, and smacking too much of mystery for gentlemen of Mr. Frend's clear Unitarian capacity. However, the dispute once set a going, has seized violently on George's pericranick; and it is necessary for his health that he should speedily come to a resolution of his doubts. He goes about teasing his friends with his new mathematics; he even frantically talks of purchasing Manning's Algebra, which shows him far gone, for, to my knowledge, he has not been master of seven shillings a good time. George's pockets and ———'s brains are two things in nature which

* Mr. Frend, many years the Actuary of the Rock Insurance Office, in early life the champion of Unitarianism at Cambridge, the object of a great University's displeasure; in short, the "village Hampden" of the day.

do not abhor a vacuum. . . . Now, if you could step in, in this trembling suspense of his reason, and he should find on Saturday morning, lying for him at the Porter's Lodge, Clifford's Inn—his safest address—Manning's Algebra, with a neat manuscription in the blank leaf, running thus, 'FROM THE AUTHOR!' it might save his wits, and restore the unhappy author to those studies of poetry and criticism, which are at present suspended, to the infinite regret of the whole literary world. N.B.—Dirty books, smeared leaves, and dogs' ears will be rather a recommendation than otherwise. N.B.—He must have the book as soon as possible, or nothing can withhold him from madly purchasing the book on tick. . . . Then shall we see him sweetly restored to the chair of Longinus—to dictate in smooth and modest phrase the laws of verse; to prove that Theocritus first introduced the Pastoral, and Virgil and Pope brought it to its perfection; that Gray and Mason—who always hunt in couples in George's brain—have shown a great deal of poetical fire in their lyric poetry; that Aristotle's rules are not to be servilely followed, which George has shown to have imposed great shackles upon modern genius. His poems, I find, are to consist of two vols.—reasonable octavo; and a third book will exclusively contain criticisms, in which he asserts he has gone *pretty deeply* into the laws of blank verse and rhyme—epic poetry, dramatic and pastoral ditto—all which is to come out before Christmas. But, above all, he has *touched* most *deeply* upon the Drama, comparing the English with the modern German stage, their merits and defects. Apprehending that his *studies* (not to mention his *turn*, which I take to be chiefly towards the lyrical poetry) hardly qualified him for these disquisitions, I modestly inquired what plays he had read. I found by George's reply that he *had* read Shakspeare, but that was a good while since: he calls him a great but irregular genius, which I think to be an original and just remark. (Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Ben Jonson, Shirley, Marlowe, Ford, and the worthies of Dodsley's Collection—he confessed he had read none of them, but professed his *intention* of looking through them all, so as to be able to *touch* upon them in his book.) So Shakspeare, Otway, and, I believe, Rowe, to whom he was naturally directed by Johnson's Lives, and these not read lately, are to stand him in stead of a general knowledge of the subject. God bless his dear absurd head!

"By-the-by, did I not write you a letter with something

about an invitation in it? but let that pass; I suppose it is not agreeable.

"N.B.—It would not be amiss if you were to accompany your *present* with a dissertation on negative quantities.

"C. L."

The "Algebra" arrived; and Lamb wrote the following invitation, in hope to bring the author and the presentee together.

TO MR. MANNING.

"1800.

"George Dyer is an Archimedes, and an Archimagus, and a Tycho Brahé, and a Copernicus; and thou art the darling of the Nine, and midwife to their wandering babe also! We take tea with that learned poet and critic on Tuesday night, at half past five, in his neat library; the repast will be light and Attic, with criticism. If thou couldst contrive to wheel up thy dear carcase on the Monday, and after dining with us on tripe, calves' kidneys, or whatever else the Cornucopia of St. Clare may be willing to pour out on the occasion, might we not adjourn together to the Heathen's—thou with thy Black Backs, and I with some innocent volume of the Bell Letters, Shenstone or the like: it would make him wash his old flannel gown (that has not been washed, to my knowledge, since it has been *his*—oh, the long time!) with tears of joy. Thou shouldst settle his scruples, and unravel his cobwebs, and sponge off the sad stuff that weighs upon his dear wounded pia mater; thou shouldst restore light to his eyes, and him to his friends and the public; Parnassus should shower her civic crowns upon thee for saving the wits of a citizen! I thought I saw a lucid interval in George the other night: he broke in upon my studies just at tea-time, and brought with him Dr. A——, an old gentleman who ties his breeches' knees with packthread, and boasts that he has been disappointed by ministers. The Doctor wanted to see *me*; for I being a poet, he thought I might furnish him with a copy of verses to suit his Agricultural Magazine. The Doctor, in the course of the conversation, mentioned a poem called the 'Epigoniad,' by one Wilkie, an epic poem, in which there is not one tolerable good line all through, but every incident and speech borrowed from Homer. George had been sitting inattentive, seemingly, to what was going on —hatching of negative quantities—when, suddenly, the

name of his old friend, Homer, stung his pericranicks, and, jumping up, he begged to know where he could meet with Wilkie's works. 'It was a curious fact that there should be such an epic poem and he not know of it; and he *must* get a copy of it, as he was going to touch pretty deeply upon the subject of the Epic; and he was sure there must be some things good in a poem of 8000 lines!' I was pleased with this transient return of his reason and recurrence to his old ways of thinking: it gave me great hopes of a recovery, which nothing but your book can completely insure. Pray come on Monday, if you *can*, and stay your own time. I have a good large room, with two beds in it, in the handsomest of which thou shalt repose a-nights, and dream of Spheroides. I hope you will understand by the nonsense of this letter that I am *not* melancholy at the thoughts of thy coming: I thought it necessary to add this, because you love *precision*. Take notice that our stay at Dyer's will not exceed eight o'clock, after which our pursuits will be our own. But, indeed, I think a little recreation among the Bell Letters and poetry will do you some service in the interval of severer studies. I hope we shall fully discuss with George Dyer what I have never yet heard done to my satisfaction, the reason of Dr. Johnson's malevolent strictures on the higher species of the Ode."

Manning could not come; and Dyer's subsequent symptoms are described in the following letter:

TO MR. MANNING.

"December 27th, 1800.

"At length George Dyer's phrenesis has come to a crisis; he is raging and furiously mad. I waited upon the Heathen Thursday was a se'nnight; the first symptom which struck my eye and gave me incontrovertible proof of the fatal truth was a pair of nankeen pantaloons four times too big for him, which the said Heathen did pertinaciously affirm to be new.

"They were absolutely ingrained with the accumulated dirt of ages; but he affirmed them to be clean. He was going to visit a lady that was nice about those things, and that's the reason he wore nankeen that day. And then he danced, and capered, and fidgeted, and pulled up his pantaloons, and hugged his intolerable flannel vestment closer about his poetic loins; anon he gave it loose to the zephyrs which plentifully insinuate their tiny bodies

through every crevice, door, window, or wainscot, expressly formed for the exclusion of such impertinents. Then he caught at a proof-sheet, and catched up a laundress's bill instead—made a dart at Bloomfield's Poems, and threw them in agony aside. I could not bring him to one direct reply; he could not maintain his jumping mind in a right line for the tithe of a moment by Clifford's Inn clock. He must go to the printer's immediately—the most unlucky accident—he had struck off five hundred impressions of his Poems, which were ready for delivery to subscribers, and the Preface must all be expunged; there were eighty pages of Preface, and not till that morning had he discovered that in the very first page of said Preface he had set out with a principle of Criticism fundamentally wrong, which vitiated all his following reasoning; the Preface must be expunged, although it cost him £30, the lowest calculation, taking in paper and printing! In vain have his real friends remonstrated against this Midsummer madness. George is as obstinate as a Primitive Christian, and wards and parries off all our thrusts with one unanswerable fence—'Sir, it's of great consequence that the *world* is not *misled*!'

"I've often wished I lived in the Golden Age, before doubt, and propositions, and corollaries got into the world. *Now*, as Joseph D——, a Bard of Nature, sings, going up Malvern Hills,

> 'How steep! how painful the ascent;
> It needs the evidence of *close deduction*
> To know that ever I shall gain the top.'

You must know that Joe is lame, so that he had some reason for so singing. These two lines, I assure you, are taken *totidem literis* from a very *popular* poem. Joe is also an Epic Poet, as well as a Descriptive, and has written a tragedy, though both both his drama and epopoiea are strictly *descriptive*, and chiefly of the *Beauties of Nature*, for Joe thinks *man* with all his passions and frailties not a proper subject of the *Drama*. Joe's tragedy hath the following surpassing speech in it. Some king is told that his enemy has engaged twelve archers to come over in a boat from an enemy's country and waylay him; he thereupon pathetically exclaims,

> '*Twelve*, dost thou say? Curse on those dozen villains!'

D—— read two or three acts out to us, very gravely on both sides till he came to this heroic touch, and then he asked what we laughed at. I had no more muscles that

day. A poet that chooses to read out his own verses has but a limited power over you. There is a bound where his authority ceases."

The following letter, written sometime in 1801, shows that Lamb had succeeded in obtaining occasional employment as a writer of epigrams for newspapers, by which he added something to his slender income. The disparaging reference to Sir James Mackintosh must not be taken as expressive of Lamb's deliberate opinion of that distinguished person. Mackintosh, at this time, was in great disfavour, for his supposed apostasy from the principles of his youth, with Lamb's philosophic friends, whose minds were of a temperament less capable than that of the author of the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ* of being diverted from abstract theories of liberty by the crimes and sufferings which then attended the great attempt to reduce them to practice. Lamb, through life utterly indifferent to politics, was always ready to take part with his friends, and probably scouted, with them, Mackintosh as a deserter.

TO MR. MANNING.

"1801.

"Dear Manning,—I have forborne writing so long (and so have you, for the matter of that), until I am almost ashamed either to write or to forbear any longer. But as your silence may proceed from some worse cause than neglect—from illness, or some mishap which may have befallen you, I begin to be anxious. You may have been burnt out, or you may have married, or you may have broken a limb, or turned country parson; any of these would be excuse sufficient for not coming to my supper. I am not so unforgiving as the nobleman in Saint Mark. For me, nothing new has happened to me, unless that the poor Albion died last Saturday of the world's neglect, and with it the fountain of my puns is choked up for ever.

"All the Lloyds wonder that you do not write to them. They apply to me for the cause. Relieve me from this weight of ignorance, and enable me to give a truly oracular response.

"I have been confined some days with swelled cheek and rheumatism—they divide and govern me with a viceroy-headache in the middle. I can neither write nor read without great pain. It must be something like obstinacy that I choose this time to write to you in after many months interruption.

"I will close my letter of simple inquiry with an epigram on Mackintosh, the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*-man—who has got a place at last—one of the last I *did* for the Albion:

> 'Though thou'rt like Judas, an apostate black,
> In the resemblance one thing thou dost lack;
> When he had gotten his ill-purchas'd pelf,
> He went away, and wisely hang'd himself:
> This thou may'st do at last, yet much I doubt,
> If thou hast any *Bowels* to gush out!'

"Yours, as ever, C. LAMB."

Some sportive extravagance, which, however inconsistent with Lamb's early sentiments of reverent piety, was very far from indicating an irreligious purpose, seems to have given offence to Mr. Walter Wilson, and to have induced the following letter, illustrative of the writer's feelings at this time on the most momentous of all subjects:

TO MR. WALTER WILSON.

"August 14th, 1801.

"Dear Wilson,—I am extremely sorry that any serious difference should subsist between us, on account of some foolish behaviour of mine at Richmond; you knew me well enough before, that a very little liquor will cause a considerable alteration in me.

"I beg you to impute my conduct solely to that, and not to any deliberate intention of offending you, from whom I have received so many friendly attentions. I know that you think a very important difference in opinion with respect to some more serious subjects between us makes me a dangerous companion; but do not rashly infer, from some slight and light expressions which I may have made use of in a moment of levity, in your presence, without sufficient regard to your feelings—do not conclude that I am an inveterate enemy to all religion. I have had a time of seriousness, and I have known the importance and reality of a religious belief. Latterly, I acknowledge, much of my seriousness has gone off, whether from new company, or some other new associations; but I still retain at bottom a conviction of the truth, and a certainty of the usefulness of religion. I will not pretend to more gravity or feeling than I at present possess; my intention is not to persuade you that any great alteration is probable in me; sudden converts are superficial and transitory; I only want you to believe that I have *stamina* of seriousness within me, and that I desire nothing more than a return of that friendly

intercourse which used to subsist between us, but which my folly has suspended.

"Believe me, very affectionately yours, C. LAMB."

In 1803 Coleridge visited London, and at his departure left the superintendence of a new edition of his poems to Lamb. The following letter, written in reply to one of Coleridge's, giving a mournful account of his journey to the north with an old man and his influenza, refers to a splendid smoking-cap which Coleridge had worn at their evening meetings:

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"April 13th, 1803.

"My dear Coleridge,—Things have gone on better with me since you left me. I expect to have my old housekeeper home again in a week or two. She has mended most rapidly. My health, too, has been better since you took away that Montero cap. I have left off Cayenned eggs and such bolsters to discomfort. There was death in that cap. I mischievously wished that by some inauspicious jolt the whole contents might be shaken, and the coach set on fire; for you said they had that property. How the old gentleman, who joined you at Grantham, would have clapt his hands to his knees, and not knowing but it was an immediate visitation of heaven that burnt him, how pious it would have made him—him, I mean, that brought the influenza with him, and only took places for one—an old sinner; he must have known what he had got with him! However, I wish the cap no harm for the sake of the *head it fits*, and could be content to see it disfigure my healthy sideboard again.

"What do you think of smoking? I want your sober, *average*, *noon opinion* of it. I generally am eating my dinner about the time I should determine it.

"Morning is a girl, and can't smoke—she's no evidence one way or the other; and Night is so *bought over*, that he can't be a very upright judge. May be the truth is that *one* pipe is wholesome; *two* pipes toothsome; *three* pipes noisome; *four* pipes fulsome; *five* pipes quarrelsome, and that's the *sum* on't. But that is deciding rather upon rhyme than reason. . . . After all, our instincts *may* be best. Wine, I am sure, good, mellow, generous Port, can hurt nobody, unless those who take it to excess, which they may easily avoid if they observe the rules of temperance.

"Bless you, old sophist, who next to human nature taught

me all the corruption I was capable of knowing! And bless your Montero cap, and your trail (which shall come after you whenever you appoint), and your wife and children—Pipos especially.

"When shall we two smoke again? Last night I had been in a sad quandary of spirits, in what they call the evening, but a pipe, and some generous Port, and King Lear (being alone), had their effects as solacers. I went to bed pot-valiant. By the way, may not the Ogles of Somersetshire be remotely descended from King Lear? C. L."

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Mary sends love from home.

"1803.

"Dear C.,—I do confess that I have not sent your books as I ought to have done; but you know how the human free-will is tethered, and that we perform promises to ourselves no better than to our friends. A watch is come for you. Do you want it soon, or shall I wait till some one travels your way? You, like me, I suppose, reckon the lapse of time from the waste thereof, as boys let a cock run to waste; too idle to stop it, and rather amused with seeing it dribble. Your poems have begun printing; Longman sent to me to arrange them, the old and the new together. It seems you have left it to him; so I classed them, as nearly as I could, according to dates. First, after the Dedication (which must march first), and which I have transplanted from before the Preface (which stood like a dead wall of prose between), to be the first poem—then comes 'The Pixies,' and the things most juvenile—then on 'To Chatterton,' &c.—on, lastly, to the 'Ode on the Departing Year,' and 'Musings'—which finish. Longman wanted the Ode first, but the arrangement I have made is precisely that marked out in the Dedication, following the order of time. I told Longman I was sure that you would omit a good portion of the first edition. I instanced several sonnets, &c.—but that was not his plan, and, as you have done nothing in it, all I could do was to arrange 'em on the supposition that all were to be retained. A few I positively rejected; such as that of 'The Thimble,' and that of 'Flicker and Flicker's wife,' and that *not* in the manner of Spenser, which you yourself had stigmatized—and 'The Man of Ross'—I doubt whether I should this last. It is not too late to save it. The first proof is only just come. I have been forced to call that Cupid's Elixir, 'Kisses.' It

stands in your first volume as an Effusion, so that, instead of prefixing the Kiss to that of 'One Kiss, dear Maid,' &c., I have ventured to entitle it 'To Sara.' I am aware of the nicety of changing even so mere a trifle as a title to so short a piece, and subverting old associations; but two called 'Kisses' would have been absolutely ludicrous, and 'Effusion' is no name, and these poems come close together. I promise you not to alter one word in any poem whatever, but to take your last text, where two are. Can you send any wishes about the book? Longman, I think, should have settled with you; but it seems you have left it to him. Write as soon as you possibly can; for, without making myself responsible, I feel myself, in some sort, accessary to the selection, which I am to proof-correct; but I decidedly said to Biggs that I was sure you would omit more. Those I have positively rubbed off I can swear to *individually* (except the 'Man of Ross,' which is too familiar in Pope), but no others—you have your cue. For my part, I had rather all the *Juvenilia* were kept—*memoriæ causâ*.

"Robert Lloyd has written me a masterly letter, containing a character of his father; see how different from Charles he views the old man! (*Literatim.*) 'My father smokes, repeats Homer in Greek, and Virgil, and is learning, when from business, with all the vigour of a young man, Italian. He is really a wonderful man. He mixes public and private business, the intricacies of disordering life with his religion and devotion. No one more rationally enjoys the romantic scenes of nature, and the chit-chat and little vagaries of his children; and, though surrounded with an ocean of affairs, the very neatness of his most obscure cupboard in the house passes not unnoticed. I never knew any one view with such clearness, nor so well satisfied with things as they are, and make such allowance for things which must appear perfect Syriac to him.' By the last he means the Lloydisms of the younger branches. His portrait of Charles (exact as far as he has had opportunities of noting him) is most exquisite. 'Charles is become steady as a church, and as straightforward as a Roman Road. It would distract him to mention anything that was not as plain as sense; he seems to have run the whole scenery of life, and now rests as the formal precisian of non-existence.' Here is genius, I think, and 'tis seldom a young man, a Lloyd, looks at a father (so differing) with such good nature while he is alive. Write—

"I am in post-haste, C. Lamb.

"Love, &c., to Sara, P., and H."

The next letter, containing a farther account of Lamb's superintendence of the new edition, bears the date of Saturday, 27th May, 1803.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"My dear Coleridge,—The date of my last was one day prior to the receipt of your letter, full of foul omens. I explain, lest you should have thought mine too light a reply to such sad matter. I seriously hope by this time you have given up all thoughts of journeying to the green Islands of the Blest—voyages in time of war are very precarious—or, at least, that you will take them in your way to the Azores. Pray be careful of this letter till it has done its duty, for it is to inform you that I have booked off your watch (laid in cotton like an untimely fruit), and with it Condillac, and all other books of yours which were left here. These will set out on Monday next, the 29th May, by Kendal wagon, from White Horse, Cripplegate. You will make seasonable inquiries, for a watch mayn't come your way again in a hurry. I have been repeatedly after Tobin, and now hear that he is in the country, not to return till middle of June. I will take care and see him with the earliest. But cannot you write pathetically to *him*, enforcing a speedy mission of your books for literary purposes? He is too good a retainer to Literature to let her interests suffer through his default. And why, in the name of Beelzebub, are your books to travel from Barnard's Inn to the Temple, and thence circuitously to Cripplegate, when their business is to take a short cut down Holborn Hill, up Snow do., on to Wood-street, &c.? The former mode seems a sad, superstitious subdivision of labour. Well! the 'Man of Ross' is to stand; Longman begs for it; the printer stands with a wet sheet in one hand and a useless Pica in the other, in tears, pleading for it; I relent. Besides, it was a Salutation poem, and has the mark of the beast 'Tobacco' upon it. Thus much I have done; I have swept off the lines about *widows* and *orphans* in second edition, which (if you remember) you most awkwardly and illogically caused to be inserted between two *Ifs*, to the great breach and disunion of said *Ifs*, which now meet again (as in first edition), like two clever lawyers arguing a case. Another reason for subtracting the pathos was, that the 'Man of Ross' is too familiar to need telling what he did, especially in worse lines than Pope told it, and it now stands simply as 'Reflections at an Inn about a known Character,' and

sucking an old story into an accommodation with present feelings. Here is no breaking spears with Pope, but a new, independent, and really a very pretty poem. In fact, 'tis as I used to admire it in the first volume, and I have even dared to restore

'If 'neath this roof thy *wine-cheer'd* moments pass,'

for

'Beneath this roof if thy cheer'd moments pass.'

'Cheer'd' is a sad general word, '*wine-cheer'd*' I'm sure you'd give me, if I had a speaking-trumpet to sound to you 300 miles. But I am your *factotum*, and that, save in this instance, which is a single case, and I can't get at you, shall be next to a *fac-nihil*—at most a *fac-simile*. I have ordered 'Imitation of Spenser' to be restored on Wordsworth's authority; and now, all that you will miss will be 'Flicker and Flicker's Wife,' 'The Thimble,' 'Breathe, *dear harmonist*,' and *I believe*, 'The Child that was fed with Manna.' Another volume will clear off all your Anthologic Morning-Postian Epistolary Miscellanies; but pray don't put 'Christabel' therein; don't let that sweet maid come forth attended with Lady Holland's mob at her heels. Let there be a separate volume of Tales, Choice Tales, 'Ancient Mariners,' &c. C. LAMB."

The following is the fragment of a letter (part being lost) on the re-appearance of the Lyrical Ballads, in two volumes, and addressed

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Thanks for your letter and present. I had already borrowed your second volume. What most please me are 'The Song of Lucy;' *Simon's sickly daughter*, in 'The Sexton,' made me *cry*. Next to these are the description of the continuous echoes in the story of 'Joanna's Laugh,' where the mountains, and all the scenery, absolutely seem alive; and that fine Shakspearian character of the 'happy man,' in the 'Brothers,'

'That creeps about the fields,
Following his fancies by the hour, to bring
Tears down his cheek, or solitary smiles
Into his face, until the setting sun
Write Fool upon his forehead!'

I will mention one more—the delicate and curious feeling in the wish for the 'Cumberland Beggar,' that he may have about him the melody of birds, although he hear them not. Here the mind knowingly passes a fiction upon herself, first

substituting her own feelings for the Beggar's, and in the same breath detecting the fallacy, will not part with the wish. The 'Poet's Epitaph' is disfigured, to my taste, by the common satire upon parsons and lawyers in the beginning, and the coarse epithet of 'pin-point' in the sixth stanza. All the rest is eminently good, and your own. I will just add that it appears to me a fault in the 'Beggar,' that the instructions conveyed in it are too direct, and like a lecture: they don't slide into the mind of the reader while he is imagining no such matter. An intelligent reader finds a sort of insult in being told, 'I will teach you how to think upon this subject.' This fault, if I am right, is in a ten-thousandth worse degree to be found in Sterne, and many, many novelists and modern poets, who continually put a sign-post up to show where you are to feel. They set out with assuming their readers to be stupid; very different from 'Robinson Crusoe,' 'The Vicar of Wakefield,' 'Roderick Random,' and other beautiful, bare narratives. There is implied an unwritten compact between author and reader; 'I will tell you a story, and I suppose you will understand it.' Modern novels, 'St. Leons' and the like, are full of such flowers as these—'Let not my readers suppose,' 'Imagine, if you can, modest!' &c. I will here have done with praise and blame. I have written so much, only that you may not think I have passed over your book without observation..... I am sorry that Coleridge has christened his 'Ancient Marinere' 'a Poet's Reverie;' it is as bad as Bottom the Weaver's declaration that he is not a lion, but only the scenical representation of a lion. What new idea is gained by this title but one subversive of all credit —which the tale should force upon us—of its truth!

For me, I was never so affected with any human tale. After first reading it, I was totally possessed of it for many days. I dislike all the miraculous part of it, but the feelings of a man under the operation of such scenery dragged me along like Tom Pipes's magic whistle. I totally differ from your idea that the 'Marinere' should have had a character and profession. This is a beauty in 'Gulliver's Travels,' where the mind is kept in a placid state of little wonderments; but the 'Ancient Marinere' undergoes such trials as overwhelm and bury all individuality or memory of what he was—like the state of a man in a bad dream, one terrible peculiarity of which is that all consciousness of personality is gone. Your other observation is, I think as well, unfounded: the 'Marinere,' from being conversant

in supernatural events, *has* acquired a supernatural and strange cast of *phrase*, eye, appearance, &c., which frighten the 'wedding-guest.' You will excuse my remarks, because I am hurt and vexed that you should think it necessary, with a prose apology, to open the eyes of dead men that cannot see.

"To sum up a general opinion of the second volume, I do not feel any one poem in it so forcibly as the 'Ancient Marinere,' the 'Mad Mother,' and the 'Lines at Tintern Abbey' in the first."

The following letter was addressed, on the 28th of September, 1805, when Lamb was bidding his generous farewell to tobacco, to Wordsworth, then living in noble poverty with his sister in a cottage by Grasmere, which is as sacred to some of his old admirers as even Shakspeare's House.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"My dear Wordsworth (or Dorothy rather, for to you appertains the biggest part of this answer by right), I will not again deserve reproach by so long a silence. I have kept deluding myself with the idea that Mary would write to you, but she is so lazy (or I believe the true state of the case, so diffident), that it must revert to me, as usual; though she writes a pretty good style, and has some notion of the force of words, she is not always so certain of the true orthography of them; and that, and a poor handwriting (in this age of female calligraphy), often deters her, where no other reason does.*

"We have neither of us been very well for some weeks past. I am very nervous, and she most so at those times when I am; so that a merry friend, adverting to the noble consolation we were able to afford each other, denominated us, not unaptly, Gum-Boil and Tooth-Ache, for they used to say that a gum-boil is a great relief to a tooth-ache.

"We have been two tiny excursions this summer for three or four days each, to a place near Harrow, and to Egham, where Cooper's Hill is: and that is the total history of our rustications this year. Alas! how poor a round to Skiddaw, and Helvellyn, and Borrowdale, and the magnificent sesquipedalia of the year 1802. Poor old Molly! to have lost her pride, that 'last infirmity of noble minds,' and her cow. Fate need not have set her wits to such an old Molly. I am heartily sorry for her. Remember us lov-

* This is mere banter; Miss Lamb wrote a very good hand.

ingly to her; and in particular remember us to Mrs. Clarkson in the most kind manner.

"I hope, by 'southwards,' you mean that she will be at or near London, for she is a great favourite of both of us, and we feel for her health as much as possible for any one to do. She is one of the friendliest, comfortablest women we know, and made our little stay at your cottage one of the pleasantest times we ever past. We were quite strangers to her. Mr. C. is with you too; our kindest separate remembrances to him. As to our special affairs, I am looking about me. I have done nothing since the beginning of last year, when I lost my newspaper job, and having had a long idleness, I must do something, or we shall get very poor. Sometimes I think of a farce, but hitherto all schemes have gone off; an idle brag or two of an evening, vapouring out of a pipe, and going off in the morning; but now I have bid farewell to my 'sweet enemy,' Tobacco, as you will see in my next page,* I shall perhaps set nobly to work. Hang work!

"I wish that all the year were holiday; I am sure that indolence — indefeasible indolence — is the true state of man, and business the invention of the old Teazer, whose interference doomed Adam to an apron and set him a hoeing. Pen and ink, and clerks and desks, were the refinements of this old torturer some thousand years after, under pretence of 'Commerce allying distant shores, Promoting and diffusing knowledge, good,' &c., &c.

"Yours truly, C. LAMB."

CHAPTER V.

Letters to Hazlitt, etc.—[1805 to 1810.]

ABOUT the year 1805, Lamb was introduced to one whose society through life was one of his chief pleasures—the great critic and thinker, William Hazlitt—who, at that time, scarcely conscious of his own literary powers, was striving hard to become a painter. At the period of the following

* The "Farewell to Tobacco" was transcribed on the next page; but the actual sacrifice was not completed till some years after.

letter (which is dated 15th March, 1806), Hazlitt was residing with his father, a Unitarian minister, at Wem.

TO MR. HAZLITT.

"Dear H.—I am a little surprised at no letter from you. This day week, to wit, Saturday, the 8th of March, 1806, I book'd off by the Wem coach, Bull and Mouth Inn, directed to *you*, at the Rev. Mr. Hazlitt's, Wem, Shropshire, a parcel containing, besides a book, &c., a rare print, which I take to be a Titian; begging the said W. H. to acknowledge the receipt thereof; which he not having done, I conclude the said parcel to be lying at the inn, and may be lost; for which reason, lest you may be a Wales-hunting at this instant, I have authorized any of your family, whosoever first gets this, to open it, that so precious a parcel may not moulder away for want of looking after. What do you in Shropshire when so many fine pictures are a-going a-going every day in London? Monday I visit the Marquis of Lansdowne's, in Berkeley Square. Catalogue 2*s.* 6*d.* Leonardos in plenty. Some other day this week, I go to see Sir Wm. Young's, in Stratford Place. Hulse's, of Blackheath, are also to be sold this month, and in May, the first private collection in Europe, Welbore Ellis Agar's. And there are you perverting Nature in lying landscapes, filched from old rusty Titians, such as I can scrape up here to send you, with an additament from Shropshire nature thrown in to make the whole look unnatural. I am afraid of your mouth watering when I tell you that Manning and I got into Angerstein's on Wednesday. *Mon Dieu!* Such Claudes! Four Claudes bought for more than £10,000 (those who talk of Wilson being equal to Claude are either mainly ignorant or stupid); one of these was perfectly miraculous. What colours short of *bonâ fide* sunbeams it could be painted in, I am not earthly colourman enough to say; but I did not think it had been in the possibility of things. Then, a music-piece by Titian—a thousand pound picture—five figures standing behind a piano, the sixth playing; none of the heads, as M. observed, indicating great men, or affecting it, but so sweetly disposed; all leaning separate ways, but so easy, like a flock of some divine shepherd; the colouring, like the economy of the picture, so sweet and harmonious—as good as Shakspeare's 'Twelfth Night'—*almost*, that is. It will give you a love of order, and cure you of restless, fidgetty passions for a week after—more musical than the music which it would, but cannot, yet in

a manner *does*, show. I have no room for the rest. Let me say, Angerstein sits in a room—his study (only that and the library are shown), when he writes a common letter, as I am doing, surrounded with twenty pictures worth £60,000. What a luxury! Apicius and Heliogabalus, hide your diminished heads! Yours, my dear painter, C. LAMB."

Hazlitt married Miss Sarah Stoddart, sister of the present Sir John Stoddart, who became very intimate with Lamb and his sister. To her Lamb, on the 11th December, 1806, thus communicated the failure of "Mr. H."

TO MRS. HAZLITT.

"Don't mind this being a queer letter. I am in haste, and taken up by visitors, condolers, &c. God bless you.

"Dear Sarah,—Mary is a little cut at the ill success of 'Mr. H.' which came out last night, and *failed*. I know you'll be sorry, but never mind. We are determined not to be cast down. I am going to leave off tobacco, and then we must thrive. A smoking man must write smoky farces.

"Mary is pretty well, but I persuaded her to let me write. We did not apprise you of the coming out of 'Mr. H.' for fear of ill luck. You were much better out of the house. If it had taken, your partaking of our good luck would have been one of our greatest joys. As it is, we shall expect you at the time you mentioned. But, whenever you come, you shall be most welcome. God bless you, dear Sarah.

"Yours, most truly, C. L.

"Mary is by no means unwell, but I made her let me write."

The following is Lamb's account of the same calamity, addressed

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Mary's love to all of you—I wouldn't let her write.

"Dear Wordsworth,—'Mr. H.' came out last night, and failed. I had many fears; the subject was not substantial enough. John Bull must have solider fare than a *letter*. We are pretty stout about it; have had plenty of condoling friends; but, after all, we had rather it should have succeeded. You will see the prologue in most of the morning papers. It was received with such shouts as I never witnessed to a prologue. It was attempted to be encored. How hard!—a thing I did merely as a task, because it was

wanted, and set no great store by; and 'Mr. H.'!! The quantity of friends we had in the house—my brother and I being in public offices, &c.—was astonishing, but they yielded at last to a few hisses.

"A hundred hisses! (Hang the word, I write it like kisses—how different!)—a hundred hisses outweigh a thousand claps. The former come more directly from the heart. Well, 'tis withdrawn, and there is an end.

"Better luck to us, C. LAMB.

[*Turn over.*]

"P.S.—Pray, when any of you write to the Clarksons, give our kind loves, and say we shall not be able to come and see them at Christmas, as I shall have but a day or two, and tell them we bear our mortification pretty well."

About this time Miss Lamb sought to contribute to her brother's scanty income by presenting the plots of some of Shakspeare's plays in prose, with the spirit of the poet's genius interfused, and many of his happiest expressions preserved, in which good work Lamb assisted her; though he always insisted, as he did in reference to "Mrs. Leicester's School," that her portions were the best. The following letter refers to some of those aids, and gives a pleasant instance of that shyness in Hazlitt, which he never quite overcame, and which afforded a striking contrast to the boldness of his published thoughts.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"1806.

"Mary is just stuck fast in 'All's Well that Ends Well.' She complains of having to set forth so many female characters in boys' clothes. She begins to think that Shakspeare must have wanted—Imagination. I, to encourage her, for she often faints in the prosecution of her great work, flatter her with telling her how well such a play and such a play is done. But she is stuck fast, and I have been obliged to promise to assist her. To do this, it will be necessary to leave off tobacco. But I had some thoughts of doing that before, for I sometimes think it does not agree with me. W. Hazlitt is in town. I took him to see a very pretty girl, professedly, where there were two young girls—the very head and sum of the girlery was two young girls—they neither laughed, nor sneered, nor giggled, nor whispered—but they were young girls—and he sat and frowned blacker and blacker, indignant that there should be such a thing as youth and beauty, till he tore me away before sup-

per, in perfect misery, and owned he could not bear young girls; they drove him mad. So I took him home to my old nurse, where he recovered perfect tranquillity. Independent of this, and as I am not a young girl myself, he is a great acquisition to us. He is, rather imprudently I think, printing a political pamphlet on his own account, and will have to pay for the paper, &c. The first duty of an author, I take it, is never to pay any thing. But *non cuivis contigit adire Corinthum.* The managers, I thank my stars, have settled that question for me. Yours truly, C. LAMB."

Hazlitt, coming to reside in town, became a frequent guest of Lamb's, and a brilliant ornament of the parties which Lamb now began to collect on Wednesday evenings. He seems, in the beginning of 1808, to have sought solitude in a little inn on Salisbury Plain, to which he became deeply attached, and which he has associated with some of his profoundest meditations; and some fantastic letter, in the nature of a hoax, having puzzled his father, who expected him at Wem, caused some inquiries of Lamb respecting the painter's retreat, to which he thus replied in a letter to

THE REV. MR. HAZLITT.

"Temple, 18th February, 1808.

"Sir,—I am truly concerned that any mistake of mine should have caused you uneasiness, but I hope we have got a clue to William's absence, which may clear up all apprehensions. The people where he lodges in town have received direction from him to forward some linen to a place called Winterslow, in the county of Wilts (not far from Salisbury), where the lady lives whose cottage, pictured upon a card, if you opened my letter you have doubtless seen, and though we have had no explanation of the mystery since, we shrewdly suspect that at the time of writing that letter which has given you all this trouble, a certain son of yours (who is both painter and author) was at her elbow, and did assist in framing that very cartoon which was sent to amuse and mislead us in town, as to the real place of his destination.

"And some words at the back of the said cartoon, which we had not marked so narrowly before, by the similarity of the handwriting to William's, do very much confirm the suspicion. If our theory be right, they have had the pleasure of their jest, and I am afraid you have paid for it in anxiety.

"But I hope your uneasiness will now be removed, and you will pardon a suspense occasioned by Love, who does so many worse mischiefs every day.

"The letter to the people where William lodges says, moreover, that he shall be in town in a fortnight.

"My sister joins in respects to you and Mrs. Hazlitt, and in our kindest remembrances and wishes for the restoration of Peggy's health.

"I am, sir, your humble servant, C. Lamb."

Mr. and Mrs. Hazlitt afterward took up their temporary abode at Winterslow, to which place Miss Lamb addressed the following letter, containing interesting details of her own and her brother's life, and illustrating her own gentle character:

TO MRS. HAZLITT.

"December 10th, 1808.

"My dear Sarah,—I hear of you from your brother, but you do not write yourself, nor does Hazlitt. I beg that one or both of you will amend this fault as speedily as possible, for I am very anxious to hear of your health. I hope, as you say nothing about your fall to your brother, you are perfectly recovered from the effects of it.

"You cannot think how very much we miss you and H. of a Wednesday evening—all the glory of the night, I may say, is at an end. Phillips makes his jokes, and there is no one to applaud him; Rickman argues, and there is no one to oppose him.

"The worst miss of all to me is, that when we are in the dismals there is now no hope of relief from any quarter whatsoever. Hazlitt was most brilliant, most ornamental, as a Wednesday-man, but he was a more useful one on common days, when he dropped in after a quarrel or a fit of the glooms. The Sheffington is quite out now, my brother having got merry with claret and Tom Sheridan. This visit, and the occasion of it, is a profound secret, and therefore I tell it to nobody but you and Mrs. Reynolds. Through the medium of Wroughton, there came an invitation and proposal from T. S., that C. L. should write some scenes in a speaking pantomime, the other parts of which Tom now, and his father formerly, have manufactured between them. So in the Christmas holidays my brother, and his two great associates, we expect will be all three damned together; that is, I mean if Charles's share, which is done and sent in, is accepted.

"I left this unfinished yesterday, in the hope that my brother would have done it for me. His reason for refusing me was 'no exquisite reason,' for it was because he must write a letter to Manning in three or four weeks, and therefore 'he could not be always writing letters,' he said. I wanted him to tell your husband about a great work which Godwin is going to publish to enlighten the world once more, and I shall not be able to make out what it is. He (Godwin) took his usual walk one evening, a fortnight since, to the end of Hatton Garden and back again. During that walk a thought came into his mind, which he instantly sat down and improved upon till he brought it, in seven or eight days, into the compass of a reasonable-sized pamphlet.

"To propose a subscription to all well-disposed people to raise a certain sum of money, to be expended in the care of a cheap monument for the former and the future great dead men; the monument to be a white cross, with a wooden slab at the end, telling their names and qualifications. This wooden slab and white cross to be perpetuated to the end of time; to survive the fall of empires, and the destruction of cities, by means of a map, which, in case of an insurrection among the people, or any other cause by which a city or country may be destroyed, was to be carefully preserved; and then, when things got again into their usual order, the white-cross-wooden-slab-makers were to go to work again and set the wooden slabs in their former places. This, as nearly as I can tell you, is the sum and substance of it; but it is written remarkably well—in his very best manner—for the proposal (which seems to me very like throwing salt on a sparrow's tail to catch him) occupies but half a page, which is followed by very fine writing on the benefits he conjectures would follow if it were done; very excellent thoughts on death, and our feelings concerning dead friends, and the advantages an old country has over a new one, even in the slender memorials we have of great men who once flourished.

"Charles is come home and wants his dinner, and so the dead men must be no more thought of. Tell us how you go on, and how you like Winterslow and winter evenings. Knowles has not yet got back again, but he is in better spirits. John Hazlitt was here on Wednesday. Our love to Hazlitt. Yours affectionately, M. LAMB.

"*Saturday.*"

To this letter Charles added the following postcript:

"There came this morning a printed prospectus from 'S. T. Coleridge, Grasmere,' of a weekly paper, to be called 'The Friend;' a flaming prospectus. I have no time to give the heads of it. To commence first Saturday in January. There came also notice of a turkey from Mr. Clarkson, which I am more sanguine in expecting the accomplishment of than I am of Coleridge's prophecy.

"C. LAMB."

During the next year Lamb and his sister produced their charming little book of "Poetry for Children," and removed from Mitre Court to those rooms in Inner Temple Lane—most dear of all their abodes to the memory of their ancient friends—where first I knew them. The change produced its natural and sad effect on Miss Lamb, during whose absence Lamb addressed the following various letter

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"June 7th, 1809.

"Dear Coleridge,—I congratulate you on the appearance of 'The Friend.' Your first number promises well, and I have no doubt the succeeding numbers will fulfil the promise. I had a kind letter from you some time since, which I have left unanswered. I am also obliged to you, I believe, for a review in the Annual, am I not? The Monthly Review sneers at me, and asks 'if Comus is not *good enough* for Mr. Lamb?' because I have said no good serious dramas have been written since the death of Charles the First, except 'Samson Agonistes;' so because they do not know, or won't remember, that Comus was written long before, I am to be set down as an undervaluer of Milton. O, Coleridge! do kill those reviews, or they will kill us; kill all we like! Be a friend to all else, but their foe. I have been turned out of my chambers in the Temple by a landlord who wanted them for himself, but I have got other at No. 4 Inner Temple Lane, far more commodious and roomy. I have two rooms on third floor and five rooms above, with an inner staircase to myself, and all new painted, &c., and all for £30 a year! I came into them on Saturday week; and on Monday following, Mary was taken ill with fatigue of moving, and, affected, I believe, by the novelty of the home, she could not sleep, and I am left alone with a maid quite a stranger to me, and she has a month or two's sad distraction to go through. What sad large pieces it cuts out of life; out of *her* life, who is getting rather old; and we may

not have many years to live together! I am weaker, and bear it worse than I ever did. But I hope we shall be comfortable by-and-by. The rooms are delicious, and the best look backwards into Hare Court, where there is a pump always going. Just now it is dry. Hare Court trees come in at the window, so that it's like living in a garden. I try to persuade myself it is much pleasanter than Mitre Court; but, alas! the household gods are slow to come in a new mansion. They are in their infancy to me; I do not feel them yet; no hearth has blazed to them yet. How I hate and dread new places!

"I was very glad to see Wordsworth's book advertised; I am to have it to-morrow lent me, and if Wordsworth don't send me an order for one upon Longman, I will buy it. It is greatly extolled and liked by all who have seen it. Let me hear from some of you, for I am desolate. I shall have to send you, in a week or two, two volumes of Juvenile Poetry, done by Mary and me within the last six months, and that tale in prose which Wordsworth so much liked, which was published at Christmas, with nine others, by us, and has reached a second edition. There's for you! We have almost worked ourselves out of child's work, and I don't know what to do. Sometimes I think of a drama, but I have no head for play-making; I can do the dialogue, and that's all. I am quite aground for a plan, and I must do something for money. Not that I have immediate wants, but I have prospective ones. O money, money, how blindly thou hast been worshipped, and how stupidly abused! Thou art health, and liberty, and strength, and he that has thee may rattle his pockets at the foul fiend!

"Nevertheless, do not understand by this that I have not quite enough for my occasions for a year or two to come. While I think on it, Coleridge, I fetched away my books which you had at the Courier Office, and found all but a third volume of the old plays, containing 'The White Devil,' Green's 'Tu Quoque,' and the 'Honest Whore,' perhaps the most valuable volume of them all—*that* I could not find. Pray, if you can remember what you did with it, or where you took it out with you a walking perhaps, send me word, for, to use the old plea, it spoils a set. I found two other volumes (you had three), the 'Arcadia' and Daniel enriched with manuscript notes. I wish every book I have were so noted. They have thoroughly converted me to relish Daniel, or to say I relish him, for, after all, I believe I did *relish him*. You well call him sober-minded. Your notes

are excellent. Perhaps you've forgot them. I have read a review in the Quarterly, by Southey, on the Missionaries, which is most masterly. I only grudge its being there. It is quite beautiful. Do remember my Dodsley; and, pray, do write, or let some of you write. Clarkson tells me you are in a smoky house. Have you cured it? It is hard to cure any thing of smoking. Our little poems are but humble, but they have no name. You must read them, remembering they were task-work; and perhaps you will admire the number of subjects, all of children, picked out by an old Bachelor and an old Maid. Many parents would not have found so many. Have you read 'Cœlebs?' It has reached eight editions in so many weeks, yet literally it is one of the very poorest sort of common novels, with the drawback of dull religion in it. Had the religion been high and flavoured, it would have been something. I borrowed this 'Cœlebs in Search of a Wife' of a very careful, neat lady, and returned it with this stuff written in the beginning:

'If ever I marry a wife,
I'd marry a landlord's daughter;
For then I may sit in the bar,
And drink cold brandy-and-water.'

"I don't expect you can find time from your 'Friend' to write to me much, but write something, for there has been a long silence. You know Holcroft is dead. Godwin is well. He has written a very pretty, absurd book about sepulchres. He was affronted because I told him it was better than Hervey, but not so good as Sir T. Browne. This letter is all about books; but my head aches, and I hardly know what I write; but I could not let 'The Friend' pass without a congratulatory epistle. I won't criticise till it comes to a volume. Tell me how I shall send my packet to you—by what conveyance? by Longman, Short-man, or how? Give my kindest remembrances to the Wordsworths. Tell him he must give me a book. My kind love to Mrs. W. and to Dorothy, separately and conjointly. I wish you could all come and see me in my new rooms. God bless you all. C. L."

A journey into Wiltshire, to visit Hazlitt, followed Miss Lamb's recovery, and produced the following letters:

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Monday, Oct. 30th, 1809.

"Dear Coleridge,—I have but this moment received your

letter, dated the 9th instant, having just come off a journey from Wiltshire, where I have been with Mary on a visit to Hazlitt. The journey has been of infinite service to her. We have had nothing but sunshiny days, and daily walks from eight to twenty miles a day: have seen Wilton, Salisbury, Stonehenge, &c. Her illness lasted but six weeks; it left her weak, but the country has made us whole. We came back to our Hogarth Room. I have made several acquisitions since you saw them, and found Nos. 8, 9, and 10 of *The Friend*. The account of Luther in the Warteburg is as fine as any thing I ever read.* God forbid that a

* The Warteburg is a castle standing on a lofty rock, about two miles from the city of Eisenach, in which Luther was confined, under the friendly arrest of the Elector of Saxony, after Charles V. had pronounced against him in the Ban in the Imperial Diet, where he composed some of his greatest works, and translated the New Testament, and where he is recorded as engaged in the personal conflict with the Prince of Darkness, of which the vestiges are still shown in a black stain on the wall, from the inkstand hurled at the enemy. In the Essay referred to, Coleridge accounts for the story, depicting the state of the great prisoner's mind in most vivid colours, and then presenting the following picture, which so nobly justifies Lamb's eulogy that I venture to gratify myself by inserting it here.

"Methinks I see him sitting, the heroic student, in his chamber in the Warteburg, with his midnight lamp before him, seen by the late traveller in the distant plain of *Bischofsroda* as a star on the mountain! Below it lies the Hebrew Bible open, on which he gazes; his brow pressing on his palm, brooding over some obscure text, which he desires to make plain to the simple boor and to the humble artisan, and to transfer its whole force into their own natural and living tongue. And he himself does not understand it! Thick darkness lies on the original text; he counts the letters; he calls up the roots of each separate word, and questions them as the familiar spirits of an oracle. In vain: thick darkness continues to cover it; not a ray of meaning dawns through it. With sullen and angry hope he reaches for the Vulgate, his old and sworn enemy, the treacherous confederate of the Roman Antichrist, which he so gladly, when he can, rebukes for idolatrous falsehood, that had dared place

'Within the sanctuary itself their shrines,
Abominations—'

Now—O thought of humiliation—he must entreat its aid. See! there has the sly spirit of apostacy worked in a phrase which favours the doctrine of purgatory, the intercession of saints, or the efficacy of prayers for the dead; and, what is worst of all, the interpretation is plausible. The original Hebrew might be forced into this meaning: and no other meaning seems to lie *in* it, none to hover *above* it in the heights of allegory, none to lurk *beneath* it in the depths of Cabala! This is the work of the Tempter; it is a cloud of darkness conjured up between the truth of the sacred letters and the eyes of his understanding by the malice of the Evil One, and for a trial of his faith! Must he then at length confess, must he subscribe the name of LUTHER to an exposition which consecrates a weapon for the hand of the idolatrous Hierarchy? Never! Never!

"There still remains one auxiliary in reserve, the translation of the Seventy. The Alexandrine Greeks, anterior to the Church itself, could intend no support to its corruptions—the Septuagint will have profaned the Altar of Truth with no incense for the nostrils of the universal bishop to snuff up. And here again his hopes are baffled! Exactly at this perplexed passage had the Greek translator given his understanding a holiday, and made his pen supply its place. O honoured Luther! as easily mightest thou convert

man who has such things to say should be silenced for want of £100. This Custom-and-Duty-Age would have made the Preacher on the Mount take out a license, and St. Paul's Epistles not missible without a stamp. O that you may find means to go on! But, alas! where is Sir G. Beaumont? Sotheby? What is become of the rich Auditors in Albemarle Street? Your letter has saddened me.

"I am so tired with my journey, being up all night, I have neither things nor words in my power. I believe I expressed my admiration of the pamphlet. Its power over me was like that which Milton's pamphlets must have had on his contemporaries, who were tuned to them. What a piece of prose! Do you hear if it is read at all? I am out of the world of readers. I hate all that do read, for they read nothing but reviews and new books. I gather myself up unto the old things.

"I have put up shelves. You never saw a book-case in more true harmony with the contents than what I've nailed up in a room, which, though new, has more aptitudes for growing old than you shall often see—as one sometimes gets a friend in the middle of life who becomes an old friend in a short time. My rooms are luxurious; one is for prints, and one for books—a summer and a winter parlour. When shall I ever see you in them? C. L."

the whole city of Rome, with the Pope and the conclave of cardinals inclusively, as strike a spark of light from the words, and *nothing but words*, of the Alexandrine version. Disappointed, despondent, enraged, ceasing to *think*, yet continuing his brain on the stretch in solicitation of a thought; and gradually giving himself up to angry fancies, to recollections of past persecutions, to uneasy fears, and inward defiances, and floating images of the Evil Being, their supposed personal author, he sinks, without perceiving it, into a trance of slumber, during which his brain retains its waking energies, excepting that what would have been mere *thoughts* before, now (the action and counterweight of his senses and of their impressions being withdrawn) shape and condense themselves into *things*, into realities! Repeatedly half wakening, and his eyelids as often reclosing, the objects which really surround him form the place and scenery of his dream. All at once he sees the arch-fiend coming forth on the wall of the room, from the very spot, perhaps, on which his eyes had been fixed, vacantly, during the perplexed moments of his former meditation: the inkstand, which he had at the same time been using, becomes associated with it; and in that struggle of rage, which in these distempered dreams almost constantly precedes the helpless terror by the pain of which we are finally awakened, he *imagines* that he hurls it at the intruder, or, not improbably, in the first instant of awakening, while yet both his imagination and his eyes are possessed by the dream, he *actually* hurls it. Some weeks after, perhaps, during which interval he had often mused on the incident, undetermined whether to deem it a visitation of Satan to him in the body or out of the body, he discovers for the first time the dark spot on his wall, and receives it as a sign and pledge vouchsafed to him of the event having actually taken place."

MISS LAMB TO MRS. HAZLITT.

"November 7th, 1809.

"My dear Sarah,—The dear, quiet, lazy, delicious month we spent with you is remembered by me with such regret that I feel quite discontented and Winterslow-sick. I assure you I never passed such a pleasant time in the country in my life, both in the house and out of it—the card-playing quarrels, and a few gaspings for breath, after your swift footsteps up the high hills, excepted; and those drawbacks are not unpleasant in the recollection. We have got some salt butter, to make our toast seem like yours, and we have tried to eat meat suppers, but that would not do, for we left our appetites behind us, and the dry loaf, which offended you, now comes in at night unaccompanied; but, sorry am I to add, it is soon followed by the pipe. We smoked the very first night of our arrival.

"Great news! I have just been interrupted by Mr. Daw, who came to tell me he was yesterday elected a Royal Academician. He said none of his own friends voted for him; he got it by strangers, who were pleased with his picture of Mrs. White.

"Charles says he does not believe Northcote ever voted for the admission of any one. Though a very cold day, Daw was in a prodigious perspiration, for joy at his good fortune.

"More great news! My beautiful green curtains were put up yesterday, and all the doors listed with green baize, and four new boards put to the coal-hole, and fastening hasps put to the windows, and my dyed Manning-silk cut out.

"We had a good, cheerful meeting on Wednesday; much talk of Winterslow, its woods and its sunflowers. I did not so much like P—— at Winterslow as I now like him for having been with us at Winterslow. We roasted the last of his 'Beech of oily nut prolific' on Friday at the Captain's. Nurse is now established in Paradise, *alias* the incurable ward of Westminster Hospital. I have seen her sitting in most superb state, surrounded by her seven incurable companions. They call each other ladies; nurse looks as if she would be considered as the first lady in the ward; only one seemed at all likely to rival her in dignity.

"A man in the India House has resigned, by which Charles will get twenty pounds a year, and White has prevailed on him to write some more lottery puffs; if that

ends in smoke the twenty pounds is a sure card, and has made us very joyful.

"I continue very well, and return you very sincere thanks for my good health and improved looks, which have almost made Mrs. ——— die with envy. She longs to come to Winterslow as much as the spiteful elder sister did to go to the well for a gift to spit diamonds.

"Jane and I have agreed to boil a round of beef for your suppers when you come to town again. She (Jane) broke two of the Hogarth glasses while we were away, whereat I made a great noise. Farewell. Love to William, and Charles's love and good wishes for the speedy arrival of the 'Life of Holcroft,' and the bearer thereof.

"Yours, most affectionately, M. LAMB.

"*Tuesday.*

"Charles told Mrs. ———, Hazlitt had found a well in his garden, which, water being scarce in your county, would bring him in two hundred a year; and she came, in great haste, the next morning, to ask me if it were true.

"Your brother and sister are quite well."

The country excursions, with which Lamb sometimes occupied his weeks of vacation, were taken with fear and trembling—often foregone—and finally given up, in consequence of the sad effects which the excitements of travel and change produced in his beloved companion. The following refers to one of these disasters:

TO MR. HAZLITT.

"August 9th, 1810.

"Dear H.,—Epistemon is not well. Our pleasant excursion has ended sadly for one of us. You will guess I mean my sister. She got home very well (I was very ill on the journey), and continued so till Monday night, when her complaint came on, and she is now absent from home.

"I am glad to hear you are all well. I think I shall be mad if I take any more journeys with two experiences against it. I find all well here. Kind remembrances to Sarah—have just got her letter.

"H. Robinson has been to Blenheim. He says you will be sorry to hear that we should not have asked for the Titian Gallery there. One of his friends knew of it, and asked to see it. It is never shown but to those who inquire for it.

"The pictures are all Titians, Jupiter and Ledas, Mars

and Venuses, &c., all naked pictures, which may be a reason they don't show it to females. But he says they are very fine; and perhaps it is shown separately to put another fee into the shower's pocket. Well, I shall never see it.

"I have lost all wish for sights. God bless you. I shall be glad to see you in London. Yours truly,

"C. LAMB.

"*Thursday.*"

Mr. Wordsworth's Essay on Epitaphs, afterward appended to "The Excursion," produced the following letter:

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Friday, 19th Oct., 1810. E. I. Ho.

"Dear W.,—Mary has been very ill, which you have heard, I suppose, from the Montagues. She is very weak and low-spirited now. I was much pleased with your continuation of the Essay on Epitaphs. It is the only sensible thing which has been written on that subject, and it goes to the bottom. In particular I was pleased with your translation of that turgid epitaph into the plain feeling under it. It is perfectly a test. But what is the reason we have no good epitaphs, after all?

"A very striking instance of your position might be found in the church-yard of Ditton-upon-Thames, if you know such a place. Ditton-upon-Thames has been blessed by the residence of a poet, who, for love or money, I do not well know which, has dignified every grave-stone, for the last few years, with bran-new verses, all different, and all ingenious, with the author's name at the bottom of each. This sweet Swan of Thames has artfully diversified his strains and his rhymes, that the same thought never occurs twice; more justly, perhaps, as no thought ever occurs at all, there was a physical impossibility that the same thought should recur. It is long since I saw and read these inscriptions, but I remember the impression was of a smug usher at his desk in the intervals of instruction, levelling his pen. Of death, as it consists of dust and worms, and mourners and uncertainty, he had never thought; but the word 'death' he had often seen separate and conjunct with other words, till he had learned to speak of all its attributes as glibly as Unitarian Belsham will discuss you the attributes of the word 'God' in a pulpit; and will talk of infinity with a tongue that dangles from a skull that never

reached in thought and thorough imagination two inches, or farther than from his hand to his mouth, or from the vestry to the sounding-board of the pulpit.

"But the epitaphs were trim, and sprag, and patent, and pleased the survivors of Thames Ditton above the old mumpsimus of 'Afflictions Sore.' . . . . . To do justice, though, it must be owned that even the excellent feeling which dictated this dirge when new must have suffered something in passing through so many thousand applications, many of them no doubt quite misplaced, as I have seen in Islington church-yard (I think) an Epitaph to an infant, who died '*Ætatis* four months,' with this seasonable inscription appended, 'Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land,' &c. Sincerely wishing your children long life to honour, &c.,

"I remain, C. LAMB."

CHAPTER VI.

Letters to Wordsworth, etc., chiefly respecting Wordsworth's Poems.—[1815 to 1818.]

The admirers of Wordsworth—few, but energetic and hopeful—were delighted, and his opponents excited to the expression of their utmost spleen, by the appearance, in 1814, of "The Excursion" (in the quarto form marked by the bitter flippancy of Lord Byron); and by the publication, in 1815, of two volumes of Poems, some of which only were new. The following letters are chiefly expressive of Lamb's feelings respecting these remarkable works, and the treatment which his own Review of the latter received from Mr. Gifford, then the Editor of the Quarterly Review, for which it was written. The following letter is in acknowledgment of an early copy of "The Excursion."

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"1814.

"Dear Wordsworth,—I cannot tell you how pleased I was at the receipt of the great armful of poetry which you have sent me; and to get it before the rest of the world too! I have gone quite through with it, and was thinking to have accomplished that pleasure a second time before I

wrote to thank you, but M. B. came in the night (while we were out) and made holy theft of it, but we expect restitution in a day or two. It is the noblest conversational poem I ever read—a day in Heaven. The part (or rather main body) which has left the sweetest odour on my memory (a bad term for the remains of an impression so recent) is the Tales of the Church-yard; the only girl among seven brethren, born out of due time, and not duly taken away again; the deaf man and the blind man; the Jacobite and the Hanoverian, whom antipathies reconcile; the Scarron-entry of the rusticating parson upon his solitude: these were all new to me too. My having known the story of Margaret (at the beginning), a very old acquaintance, even as long back as when I saw you first at Stowey, did not make her reappearance less fresh. I don't know what to pick out of this best of books upon the best subjects for partial naming. That gorgeous sunset is famous;* I think it must have been the identical one we saw on Salisbury Plain five years ago, that drew P—— from the card-table, where he had sat from rise of that luminary to its unequalled setting; but neither he nor I had gifted eyes to see those symbols of common things glorified, such as the prophets saw them in that sunset—the wheel, the potter's clay, the wash-pot, the wine-press, the almond-tree rod, the baskets of figs, the fourfold visaged head, the throne, and Him that sat thereon.†

"One feeling I was particularly struck with, as what I recognized so very lately at Harrow Church on entering in it after a hot and secular day's pleasure, the instantaneous coolness and calming, almost transforming properties of a country church just entered; a certain fragrance which it has, either from its holiness, or being kept shut all the week, or the air that is let in being pure country, exactly what you have reduced into words—but I am feeling that which I cannot express. The reading your lines about it fixed me for a time, a monument in Harrow Church; do you know it? with its fine long spire, white as washed

* The passage to which the allusion applies does not picture a sunset, but the effect of sunlight on a receding mist among the mountains, in the second book of "The Excursion."

† "Fix'd resemblances were seen
To implements of ordinary use,
But vast in size, in substance glorified;
Such as by Hebrew prophets were beheld
In vision—forms uncouth of mightiest powers,
For admiration and mysterious awe."

marble, to be seen, by vantage of its high site, as far as Salisbury spire itself almost.

"I shall select a day or two, very shortly, when I am coolest in brain, to have a steady second reading, which I feel will lead to many more, for it will be a stock book with me while eyes or spectacles shall be lent me. There is a great deal of noble matter about mountain scenery, yet not so much as to overpower and discountenance a poor Londoner or south-countryman entirely, though Mary seems to have felt it occasionally a little too powerfully, for it was her remark during reading it, that by your system it was doubtful whether a liver in towns had a soul to be saved. She almost trembled for that invisible part of us in her.

"Save for a late excursion to Harrow, and a day or two on the banks of the Thames this summer, rural images were fast fading from my mind, and by the wise provision of the Regent, all that was country-fy'd in the Parks is all but obliterated. The very colour of green is vanished; the whole surface of Hyde Park is dry crumbling sand (*Arabia Arenosa*), not a vestige or hint of grass ever having grown there; booths and drinking-places go all round it for a mile and half, I am confident—I might say two miles in circuit—the stench of liquors, *bad* tobacco, dirty people and provisions, conquers the air, and we are stifled and suffocated in Hyde Park."

Lamb was delighted with the proposition, made through Southey, that he should review "The Excursion" in the "Quarterly"—though he had never before attempted contemporaneous criticism, and cherished a dislike to it, which the event did not diminish. The ensuing letter was addressed while meditating on his office, and uneasy lest he should lose it for want of leisure.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"1814.

"My dear W.,—I have scarce time or quiet to explain my present situation, how unquiet and distracted it is, owing to the absence of some of my compeers, and to the deficient state of payments at E. I. H., owing to bad peace speculations in the calico market. (I write this to W. W., Esq., Collector of Stamp Duties for the conjoint Northern Counties, not to W. W., Poet.) I go back, and have for these many days past, to evening work, generally at the

rate of nine hours a day. The nature of my work, too, puzzling and hurrying, has so shaken my spirits, that my sleep is nothing but a succession of dreams of business I cannot do, of assistants that give me no assistance, of terrible responsibilities. I reclaimed your book, which Hazlitt has uncivilly kept, only two days ago, and have made shift to read it again with shattered brain. It does not lose—rather some parts have come out with a prominence I did not perceive before—but such was my aching head yesterday (Sunday), that the book was like a mountain landscape to one that should walk on the edge of a precipice; I perceived beauty dizzily. Now, what I would say is, that I see no prospect of a quiet half day, or hour even, till this week and the next are past. I then hope to get four weeks' absence, and if *then* is time enough to begin, I will most gladly do what is required, though I feel my inability, for my brain is always desultory, and snatches off hints from things, but can seldom follow a 'work' methodically. But that shall be no excuse. What I beg you to do is, to let me know from Southey if that will be time enough for the 'Quarterly,' *i. e.*, suppose it done in three weeks from this date (19th Sept); if not, it is my bounden duty to express my regret, and decline it. Mary thanks you, and feels highly grateful for your 'Patent of Nobility,' and acknowledges the author of 'The Excursion' as the legitimate Fountain of Honour. We both agree that, to our feeling, Ellen is best as she is. To us there would have been something repugnant in her challenging her Penance as a Dowry; the fact is explicable, but how few are those to whom it would have been rendered explicit. The unlucky reason of the detention of 'The Excursion' was Hazlitt, for whom M. Burney borrowed it, and, after reiterated messages, I only got it on Friday. His remarks had some vigour in them;* particularly something about an old ruin being *too modern for your Primeval Nature, and about a lichen.* I forget the passage, but the whole wore an air of dispatch. That objection which M. Burney had imbibed from him about Voltaire I explained to M. B. (or tried) exactly on your principle of its being a characteristic speech.†

* This refers to an article of Hazlitt on "The Excursion" in the "Examiner," very fine in passages, but more characteristic of the critic than descriptive of the poem.

† The passage in which the copy of "Candide," found in the apartment of the Recluse, is described as "the dull production of a scoffer's brain," which had excited Hazlitt to energetic vindication of Voltaire from the charge of dulness. Whether the work, written in mockery of human hopes,

That it was no settled comparative estimate of Voltaire with any of his own tribe of buffoons—no injustice, even if *you* spoke it, for I dared say you never could relish 'Candide.' I know I tried to get through it about a twelvemonth since, and couldn't for the dulness. Now I think I have a wider range in buffoonery than you. Too much toleration, perhaps.

"I finish this after a raw, ill-baked dinner, fast gobbled up to set me off to office again, after working there till near four. O how I wish I were a rich man, even though I were squeezed camel-fashion at getting through that needle's eye that is spoken of in the *Written Word*. Apropos; is the Poet of the 'Excursion' a Christian? or is it the Peddler and the Priest that are?

"I find I miscalled that celestial splendour of the mist going off a *sunset*. That only shows my inaccuracy of head.

"Do, pray, indulge me by writing an answer to the point of time I mentioned above, or *let Southey*. I am ashamed to go bargaining in this way, but indeed I have no time I can reckon on till the first week in October. God send I may not be disappointed in that! Coleridge swore, in a letter to me, he would review 'The Excursion' in the 'Quarterly.' Therefore, though *that* shall not stop me, yet if I can do any thing, *when* done, I must know of him if he has anything ready, or I shall fill the world with loud exclaims.

"I keep writing on, knowing the postage is no more for much writing, else so fagged and dispirited I am with cursed India House work, I scarce know what I do. My left arm reposes on 'The Excursion.' I feel what it would be in quiet. It is now a sealed book."

The next letter was written after the fatal critique was dispatched to the editor, and before its appearance.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"1814.

"Dear W.,—Your experience about tailors seems to be in point blank opposition to Burton, as much as the author of 'The Excursion' does, *toto cælo*, differ in his notion of a country life, from the picture which W. H. has exhibited of the same. But, with a little explanation, you and B. may

be dull, I will not venture to determine; but I do not hesitate, at any risk, to avow a conviction that no book in the world is more adapted to make a good man wretched.

be reconciled. It is evident that he confined his observations to the genuine native London Tailor. What freaks tailor-nature may take in the country is not for him to give account of. And certainly some of the freaks recorded do give an idea of the persons in question being beside themselves, rather than in harmony with the common, moderate self-enjoyment of the rest of mankind. A flying-tailor, I venture to say, is no more *in rerum naturâ* than a flying-horse or a Gryphon. His wheeling his airy-flight from the precipice you mention had a parallel in the melancholy Jew who toppled from the monument. Were his limbs ever found? Then, the man who cures diseases by words is evidently an inspired tailor. Burton never affirmed that the art of sewing disqualified the practiser of it from being a fit organ for supernatural revelation. He never enters into such subjects. 'Tis the common, uninspired tailor which he speaks of. Again, the person who makes his smiles to be *heard* is evidently a man under possession; a demoniac tailor. A greater hell than his own must have a hand in this. I am not certain that the cause which you advocate has much reason for triumph. You seem to me to substitute light-headedness for light-heartedness by a trick, or not to know the difference. I confess, a grinning tailor would shock me. Enough of tailors!

"The 'scapes' of the Great God Pan, who appeared among your mountains some dozen years since, and his narrow chance of being submerged by the swains, afforded me much pleasure. I can conceive the water-nymphs pulling for him. He would have been another Hylas—W. Hylas. In a mad letter which Capel Lofft wrote to M. M.* Phillips (now Sir Richard), I remember his noticing a metaphysical article of Pan, signed H., and adding, 'I take your correspondent to be the same with Hylas.' Hylas had put forth a pastoral just before. How near the unfounded conjecture of the certainly inspired Lofft (unfounded as we thought it) was to being realized! I can conceive him being 'good to all that wander in that perilous flood.' One J. Scott† (I know no more) is editor of 'The Champion.' Where is Coleridge?

"That Review you speak of, I am only sorry it did not appear last month. The circumstances of haste and peculiar bad spirits under which it was written, would have

* Monthly Magazine.

† Afterward the distinguished and unfortunate editor of the London Magazine.

excused its slightness and inadequacy, the full load of which I shall suffer from its lying by so long, as it will seem to have done, from its postponement. I write with great difficulty, and can scarce command my own resolution to sit at writing an hour together. I am a poor creature, but I am leaving off gin. I hope you will see goodwill in the thing. I had a difficulty to perform not to make it all panegyric; I have attempted to personate a mere stranger to you; perhaps with too much strangeness. But you must bear that in mind when you read it, and not think that I am, in mind, distant from you or your poem, but that both are close to me, among the nearest of persons and things. I do but act the stranger in the Review. Then, I was puzzled about extracts, and determined upon not giving one that had been in the 'Examiner;' for extracts repeated give an idea that there is a meagre allowance of good things. By this way, I deprived myself of 'Sir Alfred Irthing,' and the reflections that conclude his story, which are the flower of the poem. Hazlitt had given the reflections before me. *Then* it is the first review I ever did, and I did not know how long I might make it. But it must speak for itself, if Gifford and his crew do not put words in its mouth, which I expect. Farewell. Love to all. Mary feels very bad. C. LAMB."

The apprehension expressed at the close of the last letter was dismally verified. The following contains Lamb's first burst of an indignation which lasted amid all his gentleness and tolerance unquenched through life:

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"1814.

"Dear Wordsworth,—I told you my Review was a very imperfect one. But what you will see in the 'Quarterly' is a spurious one, which Mr. Baviad Gifford has palmed upon it for mine. I never felt more vexed in my life than when I read it. I cannot give you an idea of what he has done to it, out of spite at me, because he once suffered me to be called a lunatic in his Review.* The *language* he has altered throughout. Whatever inadequateness it had to its subject, it was, in point of composition, the prettiest piece of prose I ever writ; and so my sister (to whom alone

* In alluding to Lamb's note on the great scene of "The Broken Heart," where Calantha dances on, after hearing at every pause of some terrible calamity, a writer in the "Quarterly" had affected to excuse the writer as a "maniac:" a suggestion which circumstances rendered most cruel.

I read the MS.) said. That charm, if it had any, is all gone: more than a third of the substance is cut away, and that not all from one place, but *passim*, so as to make utter nonsense. Every warm expression is changed for a nasty cold one.

"I have not the cursed alteration by me; I shall never look at it again; but for a specimen, I remember I had said the poet of 'The Excursion' 'walks through common forests as through some Dodona or enchanted wood, and every casual bird that flits upon the boughs, like that miraculous one in Tasso, but in language more piercing than any articulate sounds, reveals to him far higher love-lays.' It is now (besides half a dozen alterations in the same half dozen lines) 'but in language more *intelligent* reveals to him:' that is one I remember.

"But that would have been little, putting his shoemaker phraseology (for he was a shoemaker) instead of mine, which has been tinctured with better authors than his ignorance can comprehend; for I reckon myself a dab at *prose;* verse I leave to my betters: God help them, if they are to be so reviewed by friend and foe as you have been this quarter! I have read 'It won't do.'* But worse than altering words: he has kept a few members only of the part I had done best, which was to explain all I could of your 'Scheme of Harmonies,' as I had ventured to call it, between the external universe and what within us answers to it. To do this I had accumulated a good many short passages, rising in length to the end, weaving in the extracts as if they came in as a part of the text naturally, not obtruding them as specimens. Of this part a little is left, but so as, without conjuration, no man could tell what I was driving at. A proof of it you may see (though not judge of the whole of the injustice) by these words. I had spoken something about 'natural methodism;' and after follows, 'and *therefore* the tale of Margaret should have been postponed' (I forget my words, or his words); now the reasons for postponing it are as deducible from what goes before as they are from the 104th Psalm. The passage whence I deduced it has vanished, but clapping a colon before a *therefore* is always reason enough for Mr. Baviad Gifford to allow to a reviewer that is not himself. I assure you my complaints are founded. I know how sore a

* Though the article on "The Excursion," in the "Edinburgh Review," commenced "This will never do!" it contained ample illustrations of the author's genius, and helped the world to disprove its oracular beginning.

word altered makes one; but, indeed, of this review the whole complexion is gone. I regret only that I did not keep a copy. I am sure you would have been pleased with it, because I have been feeding my fancy for some months with the notion of pleasing you. Its imperfection or inadequateness in size and method I knew; but for the *writing part* of it I was fully satisfied; I hoped it would make more than atonement. Ten or twelve distinct passages come to my mind, which are gone, and what is left is, of course, the worse for their having been there; the eyes are pulled out, and the bleeding sockets are left.

"I read it at Arch's shop with my face burning with vexation secretly, with just such a feeling as if it had been a review written against myself, making false quotations from me. But I am ashamed to say so much about a short piece. How are *you* served! and the labours of years turned into contempt by scoundrels!

"But I could not but protest against your taking that thing as mine. Every *pretty* expression (I know there were many); every warm expression (there was nothing else) is vulgarized and frozen. But if they catch me in their camps again, let them spitchcock me! They had a right to do it, as no name appears to it, and Mr. Shoemaker Gifford, I suppose, never waived a right he had since he commenced author. Heaven confound him and all caitiffs!

"C. L."

The following letter to Mrs. Wordsworth's sister, who resided with the poet at Rydal, relates to matters of yet nearer interest.

TO MISS HUTCHINSON.

"Thursday, 19th Oct., 1815.

"Dear Miss H.,—I am forced to be the replier to your letter, for Mary has been ill, and gone from home these five weeks yesterday. She has left me very lonely and very miserable. I stroll about, but there is no rest but at one's own fireside, and there is no rest for me there now. I look forward to the worse half being past, and keep up as well as I can. She has begun to show some favourable symptoms. The return of her disorder has been frightfully soon this time, with scarce a six months' interval. I am almost afraid my worry of spirits about the E. I. House was partly the cause of her illness, but one always imputes it to the cause next at hand; more probably it comes from some

cause we have no control over or conjecture of. It cuts sad great slices out of the time, the little time, we shall have to live together. I don't know but the recurrence of these illnesses might help me to sustain her death better than if we had had no partial separations. But I won't talk of death. I will imagine us immortal, or forget that we are otherwise. By God's blessing, in a few weeks we may be making our meal together, or sitting in the front row of the Pit at Drury Lane, or taking our evening walk past the theatres, to look at the outside of them, at least, if not to be tempted in. Then we forget we are assailable; we are strong for the time as rocks; 'the wind is tempered to the shorn Lambs.' Poor C. Lloyd, and poor Priscilla! I feel I hardly feel enough for him; my own calamities press about me, and involve me in a thick integument not to be reached at by other folks' misfortunes. But I feel all I can—all the kindness I can, towards you all. God bless you! I hear nothing from Coleridge. Yours truly,

"C. LAMB."

The following three letters best speak for themselves:

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"The conclusion of this epistle getting gloomy, I have chosen this part to desire *our* kindest loves to Mrs. Wordsworth and to Dorothea. Will none of you ever be in London again?

"1815.

"Dear Wordsworth,—You have made me very proud with your successive book presents. I have been carefully through the two volumes, to see that nothing was omitted which used to be there. I think I miss nothing but a character in antithetic manner, which I do not know why you left out—the moral to the boys building the giant, the omission whereof leaves it, in my mind, less complete—and one admirable line gone (or something come instead of it), 'the stone-chat, and the glancing sand-piper,' which was a line quite alive. I demand these at your hand. I am glad that you have not sacrificed a verse to those scoundrels. I would not have had you offer up the poorest rag that lingered upon the stript shoulders of little Alice Fell, to have atoned all their malice; I would not have given 'em a red cloak to save their souls. I am afraid lest that substitution of a shell (a flat falsification of the history) for the household implement, as it stood at first, was a kind of tub

thrown out to the beast, or rather thrown out for him. The tub was a good honest tub in its place, and nothing could fairly be said against it. You say you made the alteration for the 'friendly reader,' but the 'malicious' will take it to himself. If you give 'em an inch, &c. The Preface is noble, and such as you should write. I wish I could set my name to it, *Imprimatur;* but you have set it there yourself, and I thank you. I had rather be a door-keeper in your margin, than have their proudest text swelling with my eulogies. The poems in the volumes which are new to me are so much in the old tone that I hardly received them as novelties. Of those of which I had no previous knowledge, the 'Four Yew-trees,'* and the mysterious company which you have assembled there, most struck me—'Death the Skeleton and Time the Shadow.' It is a sight not for every youthful poet to dream of; it is one of the last results he must have gone thinking on for years for. 'Laodamia' is a very original poem—I mean original with reference to your own manner. You have nothing like it. I should have seen it in a strange place, and greatly admired it, but not suspected its derivation.

"Let me in this place, for I have writ you several letters naming it, mention that my brother, who is a picture-collector, has picked up an undoubtable picture of Milton. He gave a few shillings for it, and could get no history with it, but that some old lady had had it for a great many years. Its age is ascertainable from the state of the canvas, and you need only see it to be sure that it is the original of the heads in the Tonson editions, with which we are all so well familiar. Since I saw you I have had a treat in the reading way, which comes not every day,† the Latin Poems of V. Bourne, which are quite new to me. What a heart that man had, all laid out upon town scenes, a proper counterpoise to *some people's* rural extravaganzas. Why I mention him is that your 'Power of Music' reminded me of his poem of 'The Ballad-singer in the Seven Dials.' Do you remember his epigram on the old woman who taught Newton the A B C, which, after all, he says he hesitates not to call Newton's 'Principia?' I was lately fa-

* The poem on the four great yew-trees of Borrowdale, which the poet has, by the most potent magic of the imagination, converted into a temple for the ghastly forms of Death and Time "to meet at noon-tide"—a passage surely not surpassed in any English poetry written since the days of Milton.

† The following little passage about Vincent Bourne has been previously printed.

tiguing myself with going through a volume of fine words by Lord Thurlow; excellent words; and if the heart could live by words alone, it could desire no better regales; but what an aching vacuum of matter! I don't stick at the madness of it, for that is only a consequence of shutting his eyes and thinking he is in the age of the old Elizabeth poets. From thence I turned to Bourne. What a sweet, unpretending, pretty-mannered, *matter-ful* creature, sucking from every flower, making a flower of everything, his diction all Latin, and his thoughts all English. Bless him! Latin wasn't good enough for him. Why wasn't he content with the language which Gay and Prior wrote in?

"I am almost sorry that you printed extracts from those first poems,* or that you did not print them at length. They do not read to me as they do altogether. Besides, they have diminished the value of the original (which I possess) as a curiosity. I have hitherto kept them distinct in my mind, as referring to a particular period of your life. All the rest of your poems are so much of a piece, they might have been written in the same week; these decidedly speak of an earlier period. They tell more of what you had been reading. We were glad to see the poems 'by a female friend.'† The one on the wind is masterly, but not new to us. Being only three, perhaps you might have clapped a D. at the corner, and let it have passed as a printer's mark to the uninitiated, but as a delightful hint to the better instructed. As it is, expect a formal criticism on the poems of your female friend, and she must expect it. I should have written before, but I am cruelly engaged, and like to be. On Friday I was at office from ten in the morning (two hours dinner except) to eleven at night; last night till nine. My business and office business in general have increased so; I don't mean I am there every night, but I must expect a great deal of it. I never leave till four, and do not keep a holiday now once in ten times, where I used to keep all red-letter days, and some five days besides, which I used to dub Nature's holidays. I have had my day. I had formerly little to do. So of the little that is left of life, I may reckon two thirds as dead, for time that a man may call his own is his life; and hard work and thinking about it taint even the leis-

* The "Evening Walk," and "Descriptive Sketches among the Alps"—Wordsworth's earliest poems—now happily restored in their entirety to their proper places in the poet's collected works.

† By Miss Dorothea Wordsworth.

ure hours—stain Sunday with work-day contemplations. This is Sunday; and the head-ache I have is part late hours at work the two preceding nights, and part later hours over a consoling pipe afterward. But I find stupid acquiescence coming over me. I bend to the yoke, and it is almost with me and my household as with the man and his consort.

'To them each evening had its glittering star,
And every Sabbath-day its golden sun'—

to such straits am I driven for the life of life, Time! O that from that superfluity of holiday-leisure my youth wasted, 'Age might but take some hours youth wanted not.' N.B.—I have left off spirituous liquors for four or more months, with a moral certainty of its lasting.* Farewell, dear Wordsworth!

"O happy Paris, seat of idleness and pleasure! From some returned English I hear that not such a thing as a counting-house is to be seen in her streets—scarce a desk. Earthquakes swallow up this mercantile city and its 'gripple merchants,' as Drayton hath it—'born to be the curse of this brave isle!' I invoke this, not on account of any parsimonious habits the mercantile interest may have, but, to confess the truth, because I am not fit for an office.

"Farewell, in haste, from a head that is too ill to methodize, a stomach to digest, and all out of tune. Better harmonies await you! C. LAMB."

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Excuse this maddish letter; I am too tired to write *in formâ*.

"1815.

"Dear Wordsworth,—The more I read of your two last volumes, the more I feel it necessary to make my acknowledgments for them in more than one short letter. The 'Night Piece,' to which you refer me, I meant fully to have noticed; but, the fact is, I come so fluttering and languid from business, tired with thoughts of it, frightened with fears of it, that when I get a few minutes to sit down to scribble (an action of the hand now seldom natural to me—I mean voluntary pen-work), I lose all presential memory

* Alas! for moral certainty in this moral but mortal world! Lamb's resolution to leave off spirituous liquors was a brave one; but he strengthened and rewarded it by such copious libations of porter, that his sister, for whose sake mainly he attempted the sacrifice, entreated him to "live like himself," and in a few weeks after this assurance he obeyed her.

of what I had intended to say, and say what I can, talk about Vincent Bourne, or any casual image, instead of that which I had meditated (by the way, I must look out V. B. for you). So I had meant to have mentioned 'Yarrow Visited,' with that stanza, 'But thou, that didst appear so fair;'* than which I think no lovelier stanza can be found in the wide world of poetry; yet the poem, on the whole, seems condemned to leave behind it a melancholy of imperfect satisfaction, as if you had wronged the feeling with which, in what preceded it, you had resolved never to visit it, and as if the Muse had determined, in the most delicate manner, to make you, and *scarce make you*, feel it. Else, it is far superior to the other, which has but one exquisite verse in it, the last but one, or the two last—this has all fine, except, perhaps, that *that* of 'studious ease and generous cares,' has a little tinge of the *less romantic* about it. 'The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale' is a charming counterpart to 'Poor Susan,' with the addition of that delicacy towards aberrations from the strict path, which is so fine in the 'Old Thief and the Boy by his Side,' which always brings water into my eyes. Perhaps it is the worse for being a repetition; 'Susan' stood for the representative of poor *Rus in Urbe*. There was quite enough to stamp the moral of the thing never to be forgotten; 'bright volumes of vapour,' &c. The last verse of Susan was to be got rid of, at all events. It threw a kind of dubiety upon Susan's moral conduct. Susan is a servant maid. I see her trundling her mop, and contemplating the whirling phenomenon through blurred optics; but to term her 'a poor outcast' seems as much as to say that poor Susan was no better than she should be, which I trust was not what you meant to express. Robin Goodfellow supports himself without that *stick* of a moral which you have thrown away; but how I can be brought in *felo de omittendo* for that ending to the Boy-builders is a mystery. I can't say positively now—I only know that no line oftener or readier occurs than that 'Light-hearted boys, I will build up a Giant with you.' It comes naturally, with a warm holiday, and the freshness of the blood. It is a perfect summer amulet, that I tie round my legs to quicken their motion when I go out a maying. (N.B.) I don't often go

* "But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation."

out a maying—*Must* is the tense with me now. Do you take the pun? Young Romilly is divine;* the reasons of his mother's grief being remediless—I never saw parental love carried up so high, towering above the other loves—Shakspeare had done something for the filial, in Cordelia, and, by implication, for the fatherly too, in Lear's resentment; he left it for you to explore the depths of the maternal heart. I get stupid, and flat, and flattering; what's the use of telling you what good things you have written, or—I hope I may add—that I know them to be good? Apropos—when I first opened upon the just-mentioned poem, in a careless tone, I said to Mary, as if putting a riddle, '*What is good for a bootless bene?*' To which, with infinite presence of mind (as the jest-book has it), she answered, 'a shoeless pea.' It was the first joke she ever made. Joke the second I make. You distinguish well, in your old preface, between the verses of Dr. Johnson, of the 'Man in the Strand,' and that from 'The Babes in the Wood.' I was thinking, whether taking your own glorious lines—

> 'And from the love which was in her soul
> For her youthful Romilly,'

which, by the love I bear my own soul, I think have no parallel in any of the best old ballads, and just altering it to—

> 'And from the great respect she felt
> For Sir Samuel Romilly,'

would not have explained the boundaries of prose expression, and poetic feeling, nearly as well. Excuse my levity on such an occasion. I never felt deeply in my life if that poem did not make me, both lately and when I read it in MS. No alderman ever longed after a haunch of buck venison more than I for a spiritual taste of that 'White

* The admirable little poem, entitled "The Force of Prayer," developing the depths of a widowed mother's grief, whose only son had been drowned in attempting to leap over the precipice of the "Wharf" at Bolton Abbey. The first line, printed in old English characters, from some old English ballad,

"What is good for a bootless bene?"

suggests Miss Lamb's single pun. The following are the profoundest stanzas among those which excite her brother's most just admiration:

"If for a lover the lady wept,
A solace she might borrow
From death and from the passion of death—
Old Wharf might heal her sorrow.

She weepe not for the wedding-day,
Which was to be to-morrow:
Her hope was a further-looking hope,
And hers is a mother's sorrow."

Doe' you promise. I am sure it is superlative, or will be when *dressed, i. e.*, printed. All things read raw to me in MS.; to compare *magna parvis*, I cannot endure my own writings in that state. The only one which I think would not very much win upon me in print is Peter Bell. But I am not certain. You ask me about your preface. I like both that and the supplement without an exception. The account of what you mean by imagination is very valuable to me. It will help me to like some things in poetry better, which is a little humiliating to me to confess. I thought I could not be instructed in that science (I mean the critical), as I once heard old obscene, beastly Peter Pindar, in a dispute on Milton, say he thought that if he had reason to value himself upon one thing more than another, it was in knowing what good verse was. Who looked over your proof-sheets, and left *ordebo* in that line of Virgil?

"My brother's picture of Milton is very finely painted, that is, it might have been done by a hand next to Vandyke's. It is the genuine Milton, and an object of quiet gaze for the half-hour at a time. Yet, though I am confident there is no better one of him, the face does not quite answer to Milton. There is a tinge of *petit* (or *petite*, how do you spell it?) querulousness about it; yet, hang it! now I remember better, there is not; it is calm, melancholy, and poetical. *One* of the copies of the poems you sent has precisely the same pleasant blending of a sheet of second volume with a sheet of first. I think it was page 245; but I sent it and had it rectified. It gave me, in the first impetus of cutting the leaves, just such a cold squelch as going down a plausible turning and suddenly reading 'No thoroughfare.' Robinson's is entire: I wish you would write more criticism about Spenser, &c. I think I could say something about him myself, but, Lord bless me! these 'merchants and their spicy drugs,' which are so harmonious to sing of, they lime-twig up my poor soul and body, till I shall forget I ever thought myself a bit of a genius! I can't even put a few thoughts on paper for a newspaper. I 'engross' when I should 'pen' a paragraph. Confusion blast all mercantile transactions, all traffic, exchange of commodities, intercourse between nations, all the consequent civilization, and wealth, and amity, and link of society, and getting rid of prejudices, and knowledge of the face of the globe; and rot the very firs of the forest, that look so romantic alive, and die into desks! *Vale.*

"Yours, dear W., and all yours, C. LAMB."

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"April 9th, 1816.

"Dear Wordsworth,—Thanks for the books you have given me and for all the books you mean to give me. I will bind up the Political Sonnets and Ode according to your suggestion. I have not bound the poems yet. I wait till people have done borrowing them. I think I shall get a chain, and chain them to my shelves, *more Bodleiano*, and people may come and read them at chain's length. For of those who borrow, some read slow; some mean to read, but don't read; and some neither read nor meant to read, but borrow to leave you an opinion of their sagacity. I must do my money-borrowing friends the justice to say that there is nothing of caprice or wantonness of alienation in them. When they borrow my money, they never fail to make use of it. Coleridge has been here about a fortnight. His health is tolerable at present, though beset with temptations. In the first place, the Covent Garden manager has declined accepting his tragedy, though (having read it) I see no reason upon earth why it might not have run a very fair chance, though it certainly wants a prominent part for a Miss O'Neil or a Mr. Kean. However, he is going to-day to write to Lord Byron to get it to Drury. Should you see Mrs. C., who has just written to C. a letter, which I have given him, it will be as well to say nothing about its fate till some answer is shaped from Drury. He has two volumes printing together at Bristol, both finished as far as the composition goes; the latter containing his fugitive poems, the former his Literary Life. Nature, who conducts every creature, by instinct, to its best end, has skilfully directed C. to take up his abode at a Chymist's Laboratory in Norfolk-street. She might as well have sent a *Helluo Librorum* for cure to the Vatican. God keep him inviolate among the traps and pitfalls! He has done pretty well as yet.

"Tell Miss H. my sister is every day wishing to be quietly sitting down to answer her very kind letter, but while C. stays she can hardly find a quiet time; God bless him!

"Tell Mrs. W. her postscripts are always agreeable. They are so legible too. Your manual-graphy is terrible, dark as Lycophron. 'Likelihood,' for instance, is thus typified ..... * I should not wonder if the constant making out of such paragraphs is the cause of that weakness in

* Here is a most inimitable scrawl.

Mrs. W.'s eyes, as she is tenderly pleased to express it. Dorothy, I hear, has mounted spectacles; so you have deoculated two of your dearest relations in life. Well, God bless you, and continue to give you power to write with a finger of power upon our hearts what you fail to impress, in corresponding lucidness, upon our outward eye-sight!

"Mary's love to all; she is quite well.

"I am called off to do the deposits on Cotton Wool—but why do I relate this to you, who want faculties to comprehend the great mystery of deposits, of interest, of warehouse rent, and contingent fund? Adieu! C. LAMB.

"A longer letter when C. is gone back into the country, relating his success, &c.—*my* judgment of *your* new books, &c., &c. I am scarce quiet enough while he stays.

"Yours again, C. L."

The next letter is fantastically written beneath a regular official order, the words in italics being printed.

"SIR,—*Please to state the weights and amounts of the following Lots of* *sold* *Sale*, 181 for

"*Your obedient Servant*,

"CHAS. LAMB.

"Accountant's Office, 26th April, 1816.*

"Dear W.,—I have just finished the pleasing task of correcting the revise of the poems and letter. I hope they will come out faultless. One blunder I saw and shuddered at. The hallucinating rascal had printed *battered* for *battened*, this last not conveying any distinct sense to his gaping soul. The Reader (as they call 'em) had discovered it, and given it the marginal brand, but the substitutory *n* had not yet appeared. I accompanied his notice with a most pathetic address to the printer not to neglect the correction. I know how such a blunder would 'batter at your peace.' With regard to the works, the Letter I read with unabated satisfaction. Such a thing was wanted—called for. The parallel of Cotton with Burns I heartily approve. Iz. Walton hallows any page in which his reverend name appears. 'Duty archly bending to purposes of general benevolence' is exquisite. The poems I endeavoured not to understand, but to read them with my eye alone, and I think I succeeded. (Some people will do that when they come out, you'll say.) As if I were to luxuriate to-morrow at some picture-gallery

* This is shown by the post-mark to be an error; it should be 1818.

I was never at before, and going by to-day by chance, found the door open, and having but five minutes to look about me, peeped in; just such a *chastised* peep I took with my mind at the lines my luxuriating eye was coursing over unrestrained, not to anticipate another day's fuller satisfaction. Coleridge is printing 'Christabel,' by Lord Byron's recommendation to Murray, with what he calls a vision, 'Kubla Khan,' which said vision he repeats so enchantingly that it irradiates and brings heaven and elysian bowers into my parlour while he sings or says it; but there is an observation, 'Never tell thy dreams,' and I am almost afraid that 'Kubla Khan' is an owl that won't bear daylight. I fear lest it should be discovered by the lantern of typography and clear reducting to letters no better than nonsense or no sense. When I was young, I used to chant with ecstacy 'MILD ARCADIANS EVER BLOOMING,' till somebody told me it was meant to be nonsense. Even yet I have a lingering attachment to it, and I think it better than 'Windsor Forest,' 'Dying Christian's Address,' &c. Coleridge has sent his tragedy to D. L. T.; it cannot be acted this season, and by their manner of receiving, I hope he will be able to alter it to make them accept it for next. He is, at present, under the medical care of a Mr. Gilman (Killman?), at Highgate, where he plays at leaving off laud—m; I think his essentials not touched; he is very bad, but then he wonderfully picks up another day, and his face, when he repeats his verses, hath its ancient glory; an archangel a little damaged. Will Miss H. pardon our not replying at length to her kind letter? We are not quiet enough; Morgan is with us every day, going betwixt Highgate and the Temple. Coleridge is absent but four miles, and the neighbourhood of such a man is as exciting as the presence of fifty ordinary persons. 'Tis enough to be within the whiff and wind of his genius for us not to possess our souls in quiet. If I lived with him or the *Author of the Excursion*, I should, in a very little time, lose my own identity, and be dragged along in the current of other people's thoughts, hampered in a net. How cool I sit in this office, with no possible interruption farther than what I may term *material!* There is not as much metaphysics in thirty-six of the people here as there is in the first page of Locke's 'Treatise on the Human Understanding,' or as much poetry as in any ten lines of the 'Pleasures of Hope,' or more natural 'Beggar's Petition.' I never entangle myself in any of their speculations. Interruptions, if I try to write a letter even, I have

dreadful. Just now, within four lines, I was called off for ten minutes to consult dusty old books for the settlement of obsolete errors. I hold you a guinea you don't find the chasm where I left off, so excellently the wounded sense closed again and was healed.

"N.B.—Nothing said above to the contrary, but that I hold the personal presence of the two mentioned potent spirits at a rate as high as any; but I pay dearer; what amuses others robs me of myself; my mind is positively discharged into their greater currents, but flows with a willing violence. As to your question about work; it is far less oppressive to me than it was, from circumstances; it takes all the golden part of the day away, a solid lump, from ten to four; but it does not kill my peace as before. Some day or other I shall be in a taking again. My head aches, and you have had enough. God bless you!

"C. LAMB."

CHAPTER VII.

The "London Magazine."—Character and Fate of Mr. John Scott, its Editor.—Glimpse of Mr. Thomas Griffiths Wainwright, one of its Contributors.—Miscellaneous Letters of Lamb to Wordsworth, Coleridge, and others.—[1818 to 1825.]

LAMB'S association with Hazlitt in the year 1820 introduced him to that of the "London Magazine," which supplied the finest stimulus his intellect had ever received, and induced the composition of the Essays fondly and familiarly known under the fantastic title of *Elia*. Never was a periodical work commenced with happier auspices, numbering a list of contributors more original in thought, more fresh in spirit, more sportive in fancy, or directed by an editor better qualified by nature and study to preside, than this "London." There was Lamb, with humanity ripened among town-bred experiences, and pathos matured by sorrow, at his wisest, sagest, airiest, *in*discreetest, best; Barry Cornwall, in the first bloom of his modest and enduring fame, streaking the darkest passion with beauty; John Hamilton Reynolds, lighting up the wildest eccentricities and most striking features of many-coloured life with vivid fancy; and, with others of less note, Hazlitt, whose pen, unloosed from the chain which earnest thought and metaphysical dreamings had woven, gave radiant expression to

the results of the solitary musings of many years. Over these contributors John Scott presided, himself a critic of remarkable candour, eloquence, and discrimination, unfettered by the dogmas of contending schools of poetry and art; apt to discern the good and beautiful in all; and having, as editor, that which Kent recognized in Lear, which subjects revere in kings, and boys admire in schoolmasters, and contributors should welcome in editors—*authority*; not manifested in a worrying, teasing, intolerable interference in small matters, but in a judicious and steady superintendence of the whole; with a wise allowance of the occasional excesses of wit and genius. In this respect Mr. Scott differed entirely from a celebrated poet, who was induced, just a year after, to undertake the editorship of the "New Monthly Magazine," an office for which, it may be said, with all veneration for his poetic genius, he was the most unfit person who could be found in the wide world of letters—who regarded a magazine as if it were a long affidavit, or a short answer in Chancery, in which the absolute truth of every sentiment and the propriety of every jest were verified by the editor's oath or solemn affirmation; who stopped the press for a week at a comma; balanced contending epithets for a fortnight; and, at last, grew rash in despair, and tossed the nearest, and often the worst article, "unwhipped of justice," to the impatient printer. Mr. Scott, indeed, was more fit to preside over a little commonwealth of authors than to hold a despotic rule over subject contributors; he had not the airy grace of Jeffrey, by which he might give a certain familiar liveliness to the most laborious disquisitions, and shed the glancing light of fancy among party manifestoes; nor the boisterous vigour of Wilson, riotous in power, reckless in wisdom, fusing the production of various intellects into one brilliant reflection of his own master-mind; and it was well that he wanted these weapons of a tyranny which his chief contributors were too original and too sturdy to endure. He heartily enjoyed his position; duly appreciated his contributors and himself; and when he gave audience to some young aspirant for periodical honours at a late breakfast, amid the luxurious confusion of newspapers, reviews, and uncut novels, lying about in fascinating litter, and carelessly enunciated schemes for bright successions of essays, he seemed destined for many years of that happy excitement in which thought perpetually glows into unruffled but energetic language, and is assured by the echoes of the world.

Alas! a few days after he thus appeared the object of admiration and envy to a young visitor, in his rooms in York-street, he was stretched on a bed of mental agony—the foolish victim of the guilty custom of a world which would have laughed at him for regarding himself as within the sphere of its opinion, if he had not died to shame it! In a luckless hour, instead of seeking to oppose the bitter personalities of "Blackwood" by the exhibition of a serener power, he rushed with spurious chivalry into a personal contest; caught up the weapons which he had himself denounced, and sought to unmask his opponents and draw them beyond the pale of literary courtesy; placed himself thus in a doubtful position, in which he could neither consistently reject an appeal to the conventional arbitrament of violence nor embrace it; lost his most legitimate opportunity of daring the unhallowed strife, and found another with an antagonist connected with the quarrel only by too zealous a friendship; and, at last, met his death almost by lamentable accident, in the uncertain glimmer of moonlight, from the hand of one who went out resolved not to harm him! Such was the melancholy result—first of a controversy too envenomed—and afterward of enthralment in usages, absurd in all, but most absurd when applied by a literary man to a literary quarrel. Apart from higher considerations, it may befit a life destined for the listless excesses of gaiety to be cast on an idle brawl; "a youth of folly, an old age of cards" may be no great sacrifice to preserve the hollow truce of fashionable society; but for men of thought—whose minds are their possession, and who seek to live in the minds of others by sympathy with their thoughts—for *them* to hazard a thoughtful being because they dare not own that they prefer life to death—contemplation to the grave—the preparation for eternity to the unbidden entrance on its terrors, would be ridiculous if it did not become tragical. "Sir, I am a metaphysician!" said Hazlitt once, when, in a fierce dispute respecting the colours of Holbein and Vandyke, words almost became things; "and nothing makes an impression upon me but abstract ideas;" and woeful, indeed, is the mockery when thinkers condescend to be duellists!

The Magazine did not perish with its editor; though its unity of purpose was lost, it was still rich in essays of surpassing individual merit, among which the masterly vindication of the true dramatic style by Darley; the articles of Cary, the admirable translator of Dante; and the "Con-

fessions of an English Opium Eater," held a distinguished place. Mr. De Quincy, whose youth had been inspired by enthusiastic admiration of Coleridge, shown in contributions to "The Friend," not unworthy of his master, and substantial contributions of the blessings of fortune, came up to London, and found an admiring welcome from Messrs. Taylor and Hessey, the publishers into whose hands the "London Magazine" had passed. After the good old fashion of the GREAT TRADE, these genial booksellers used to assemble their contributors round their hospitable table in Fleet-street, where Mr. De Quincy was introduced to his new allies. Among the contributors who partook of their professional festivities was a gentleman whose subsequent career has invested the recollection of his appearances in the familiarity of social life with fearful interest—Mr. Thomas Griffiths Wainwright. He was then a young man, on the bright side of thirty, with a sort of undress military air, and the conversation of a smart, lively, clever, heartless, voluptuous coxcomb. It was whispered that he had been an officer in the Dragoons; had spent more than one fortune; and he now condescended to take a part in periodical literature, with the careless grace of an amateur who felt himself above it. He was an artist also; sketched boldly and graphically; exhibited a portfolio of his own drawings of female beauty, in which the voluptuous trembled on the borders of the indelicate; and seized on the critical department of the Fine Arts, both in and out of the Magazine, undisturbed by the presence or pretensions of the finest critic on Art who ever wrote—William Hazlitt. On this subject, he composed for the Magazine, under the signature of "Janus Weathercock," articles of flashy assumption, in which disdainful notices of living artists were set off by fascinating references to the personal appearance, accomplishments, and luxurious appliances of the writer, ever the first hero of his essay. He created a new sensation in the sedate circle, not only by his braided surtouts, jewelled fingers, and various neck-handkerchiefs, but by ostentatious contempt for everything in the world but elegant enjoyment. Lamb, who delighted to find sympathy in dissimilitude, fancied that he really liked him; took, as he ever did, the genial side of character; and, instead of disliking the rake in the critic, thought it pleasant to detect so much taste and good-nature in a fashionable *roué;* and regarded all his vapid gaiety, which to severer observers looked like impertinence, as the playful effusion of a remarkably guileless

nature. We lost sight of him when the career of the "London Magazine" ended; and Lamb did not live to learn the sequel of his history.

In 1819, Mr. Wordsworth, encouraged by the extending circle of his earnest admirers, announced for publication his "Peter Bell"—a poem written in the first enthusiasm of his system, and exemplifying, amid beauty and pathos of the finest essence, some of its most startling peculiarities. Some wicked jester, gifted with more ingenuity and boldness than wit, anticipated the real "Simon Pure" by a false one, burlesquing some of the characteristics of the poet's homeliest style. This grave hoax produced the following letter from Lamb, appropriately written in alternate lines of red and black ink, till the last sentence, in which the colours are alternated, word by word—even to the signature —and "Mary's love," at the close, so that "Mary" is *black*, and her "love" *red*.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"1819.

"Dear Wordsworth,—I received a copy of 'Peter Bell' a week ago, and I hope the author will not be offended if I say I do not much relish it. The humour, if it is meant for humour, is forced; and then the price!—sixpence would have been dear for it. Mind, I do not mean *your* 'Peter Bell,' but *a* 'Peter Bell,' which preceded it about a week, and is in every bookseller's shop window in London, the type and paper nothing differing from the true one, the preface signed W. W., and the supplementary preface quoting as the author's words an extract from the supplementary preface to the 'Lyrical Ballads.' Is there no law against these rascals? I would have this Lambert Simnel whipped at the cart's tail. Who started the spurious 'P. B.' I have not heard. I should guess, one of the sneering ——; but I have heard no name mentioned. 'Peter Bell' (not the mock one) is excellent; for its matter, I mean. I cannot say the style of it quite satisfies me. It is too lyrical. The auditors to whom it is feigned to be told do not *arride me*. I had rather it had been told me, the reader, at once. 'Hartleap Well' is the tale for me; in matter as good as this, in manner infinitely before it, in my poor judgment. Why did you not add 'The Wagoner?' Have I thanked you, though, yet, for 'Peter Bell?' I would not *not have it for a good* deal of money. C—— is very foolish to scribble

about books. Neither his tongue nor fingers are very retentive. But I shall not say anything to him about it. He would only begin a very long story with a very long face, and I see him far too seldom to tease him with affairs of business or conscience when I do see him. He never comes near our house, and when we go to see him he is generally writing, or thinking: he is writing in his study till the dinner comes, and that is scarce over before the stage summons us away. The mock 'P. B.' had only this effect on me, that after twice reading it over in hopes to find something diverting in it, I reached your two books off the shelf, and set into a steady reading of them, till I had nearly finished both before I went to bed; the two of your last edition, of course I mean; and in the morning I awoke determined to take down the 'Excursion.' I wish the scoundrel imitator could know this. But why waste a wish on him? I do not believe that paddling about with a stick in a pond, and fishing up a dead author, whom *his* intolerable wrongs had driven to that deed of desperation, would turn the heart of one of these obtuse literary BELLS. There is no Cock for such Peters—hang 'em! I am glad this aspiration came upon the red ink line. It is more of a bloody curse. I have delivered over your other presents to Alsager and G. D. A., I am sure, will value it, and be proud of the hand from which it came. To G. D. a poem is a poem; his own as good as anybody's, and, God bless him! anybody's as good as his own; for I do not think he has the most distant guess of the possibility of one poem being better than another. The gods, by denying him the very faculty itself of discrimination, have effectually cut off every seed of envy in his bosom. But with envy, they excided curiosity also; and if you wish the copy again, which you destined for him, I think I shall be able to find it again for you, on his third shelf, where he stuffs his presentation copies, uncut, in shape and matter resembling a lump of dry dust; but on carefully removing that stratum, a thing like a pamphlet will emerge. I have tried this with fifty different poetical works that have been given G. D. in return for as many of his own performances, and I confess I never had any scruple in taking *my own* again, wherever I found it, shaking the adherences off, and by this means one copy of 'my works' served for G. D., and, with a little dusting, was made over to my good friend Dr. G——, who little thought whose leavings he was taking when he made me that graceful bow. By the way, the Doctor is the only one of my

acquaintance who bows gracefully—my town acquaintance, I mean. How do you like my way of writing with two inks? I think it is pretty and motley. Suppose Mrs. W. adopts it the next time she holds the pen for you. My dinner waits. I have no time to indulge any longer in these laborious curiosities. God bless you, and cause to thrive and bourgeon whatsoever you write, and fear no inks of miserable poetasters. Yours truly, CHARLES LAMB.

"Mary's love."

The following letter, probably written about this time, is entirely in red ink:

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Dear Coleridge,—A letter written in the blood of your poor friend would indeed be of a nature to startle you; but this is naught but harmless red ink, or, as the witty mercantile phrase hath it, clerk's blood. Hang 'em! my brain, skin, flesh, bone, carcase, soul, time, is all theirs. The Royal Exchange, Gresham's Folly, hath me body and spirit. I admire some of ——'s lines on you, and I admire your postponing reading them. He is a sad tattler, but this is under the rose. Twenty years ago he estranged one friend from me quite, whom I have been regretting, but never could regain since; he almost alienated you also from me, or me from you, I don't know which. But that breach is closed. The dreary sea is filled up. He has lately been at work 'telling again,' as they call it, a most gratuitous piece of mischief, and has caused a coolness betwixt me and a (not friend exactly, but) intimate acquaintance. I suspect, also, he saps Manning's faith in me, who am to Manning more than an acquaintance. Still I like his writing verses about you. Will your kind host and hostess give us a dinner next Sunday, and, better still, *not expect us* if the weather is very bad? Why you should refuse twenty guineas per sheet for Blackwood's or any other magazine passes my poor comprehension. But, as Strap says, 'you know best.' I have no quarrel with you about præprandial avocations, so don't imagine one. That Manchester sonnet* I think very likely is Capel Lofft's. Another sonnet appeared with the same initials in the same paper, which turned out to be P——'s. What do the rascals mean? Am I to have the fathering of what idle rhymes every beggarly poetaster pours forth?

* A sonnet in "Blackwood," dated Manchester, and signed C. L.

Who put your marine sonnet 'about Browne' into 'Blackwood?' I did not. So no more till we meet.

"Ever yours, C. L."

The following letter (of post-mark 1822) is addressed to Trinity College, Cambridge, when Miss Wordsworth was visiting her brother, Dr. Wordsworth.

TO MISS WORDSWORTH.

"Mary perfectly approves of the appropriation of the *feathers*, and wishes them peacock's for you fair niece's sake.

"1822.

"Dear Miss Wordsworth,—I had just written the above endearing words when M—— tapped me on the shoulder with an invitation to cold goose pie, which I was not bird of that sort enough to decline. Mrs. M——, I am most happy to say, is better. Mary has been tormented with a rheumatism, which is leaving her. I am suffering from the festivities of the season. I wonder how my misused carcase holds it out. I have played the experimental philosopher on it, that's certain. Willy* shall be welcome to a mince-pie, and a bout at commerce whenever he comes. He was in our eye. I am glad you liked my new year's speculations; everybody likes them except the author of the 'Pleasures of Hope.' Disappointment attend him! How I like to be liked, and *what I do* to be liked! They flatter me in magazines, newspapers, and all the minor reviews; the Quarterlies hold aloof. But they must come into it in time, or their leaves be waste paper. Salute Trinity Library in my name. Two special things are worth seeing at Cambridge: a portrait of Cromwell, at Sydney, and a better of Dr. Harvey (who found out that blood was red), at Dr. Davy's; you should see them. Coleridge is pretty well; I have not seen him, but hear often of him from Allsop, who sends me hares and pheasants twice a week; I can hardly take so fast as he gives. I have almost forgotten butcher's meat, as plebeian. Are you not glad the cold is gone? I find winters not so agreeable as they used to be 'when winter bleak had charms for me.' I cannot conjure up a kind similitude for those snowy flakes. Let them keep to twelfth cakes!

"Mrs. P——, our Cambridge friend, has been in town. You do not know the W——'s, in Trumpington-street. They are capital people. Ask anybody you meet who is the biggest

* Mr. Wordsworth's second son, then at the Charter House.

woman in Cambridge, and I'll hold you a wager they'll say Mrs. ——; she broke down two benches in Trinity Gardens, one on the confines of St. John's, which occasioned a litigation between the societies as to repairing it. In warm weather she retires into an ice-cellar (literally!), and dates the returns of the years from a hot Thursday some twenty years back. She sits in a room with opposite doors and windows, to let in a thorough draught, which gives her slenderer friends tooth-aches. She is to be seen in the market every morning at ten cheapening fowls, which I observe the Cambridge poulterers are not sufficiently careful to stump.

"Having now answered most of the points contained in your letter, let me end with assuring you of our very best kindness, and excuse Mary for not handling the pen on this occasion, especially as it has fallen into so much better hands! Will Dr. W. accept of my respects at the end of a foolish letter? C. L."

The following letter to Mr. Walter Wilson, who was composing a "Life of De Foe," in reply to inquiries on various points of the great novelist's history, is *dated* 24th Feb., 1823.

TO MR. WALTER WILSON.

"Dear W.,—I write that you may not think me neglectful, not that I have anything to say. In answer to your questions, it was at your house I saw an edition of 'Roxana,' the preface to which stated that the author had left out all that part of it which related to Roxana's daughter persisting in imagining herself to be so, in spite of the mother's denial, from certain hints she had picked up, and throwing herself continually in her mother's way (as Savage is said to have done in the way of his, prying in at windows to get a glimpse of her), and that it was by advice of Southern, who objected to the circumstances as being untrue, when the rest of the story was founded on fact; which shows S. to have been a stupid-ish fellow. The incidents so resemble Savage's story, that I taxed Godwin with taking Falkner from his life by Dr. Johnson. You should have the edition (if you have not parted with it), for I saw it never but at your place at the Mew's Gate, nor did I then read it to compare it with my own; only I know the daughter's curiosity is the best part of *my* 'Roxana.' The prologue you speak of was mine, and so named, but not worth much. You ask me for two or three pages of verse. I have not written so much

since you knew me. I am altogether prosaic. May be I may touch off a sonnet in time. I do not prefer 'Colonel Jack' to either 'Robinson Crusoe' or 'Roxana.' I only spoke of the beginning of it, his childish history. The rest is poor. I do not know anywhere any good character of De Foe besides what you mention.* I do not know that Swift mentions him; Pope does. I forget if D'Israeli has. Dunlop, I think, has nothing of him. He is quite new ground, and scarce known beyond 'Crusoe.' I do not know who wrote 'Quarl.' I never thought of 'Quarl' as having an author. It is a poor imitation; the monkey is the best in it, and his pretty dishes made of shells. Do you know the paper in the 'Englishman' by Sir Richard Steele, giving an account of Selkirk? It is admirable, and has all the germs of 'Crusoe.' You must quote it entire. Captain G. Carleton wrote his own memoirs; they are about Lord Peterborough's campaign in Spain, and a good book. 'Puzzelli' puzzles me, and I am in a cloud about 'Donald M'Leod.' I never heard of them; so you see, my dear Wilson, what poor assistances I can give in the way of information. I wish your book out, for I shall like to see anything about De Foe or from you. Your old friend, C. LAMB.

"From my and your old compound."

The following is the fragment of a letter addressed in the beginning of 1823 to Miss Hutchinson at Ramsgate, whither she had gone with an invalid relative.

TO MISS HUTCHINSON.

"April 25th, 1823.

"Dear Miss H.,—It gives me great pleasure (the letter now begins) to hear that you got down so smoothly, and that Mrs. M——'s spirits are so good and enterprising. It shows, whatever her posture may be, that her mind at least is not supine. I hope the excursion will enable the former to keep pace with its outstripping neighbour. Pray present our kindest wishes to her and all (that sentence should properly have come into the Postscript, but we airy, mercurial spirits, there is no keeping us in). 'Time' (as was said of one of us) 'toils after us in vain.' I am afraid our co-visit

* Those who wish to read an admirable character of De Foe, associated with the most valuable information respecting his personal history, should revert to an article in the "Edinburgh Review" on De Foe, attributed to the author of the "Lives of the Statesmen of the Commonwealth," and of the delightful "Biography of Oliver Goldsmith," almost as charming as its subject.

with Coleridge was a dream. I shall not get away before the end (or middle) of June, and then you will be frog-hopping at Boulogne; and besides, I think the Gilmans would scarce trust him with us; I have a malicious knack at cutting of apron-strings. The Saints' days you speak of have long since fled to heaven, with Astræa, and the cold piety of the age lacks fervour to recall them; only Peter left his key—the iron one of the two that 'shuts amain'—and that is the reason I am locked up. Meanwhile of afternoons we pick up primroses at Dalston, and Mary corrects me when I call 'em cowslips. God bless you all, and pray remember me euphoniously to Mr. G——. That Lee Priory must be a dainty bower. Is it built of flints? and does it stand at Kingsgate?"

In this year Lamb made his greatest essay in housekeeping, by occupying Colebrook Cottage at Islington, on the banks of his beloved New River. There occurred the immersion of George Dyer at noontide, which supplies the subject of one of "The Last Essays of Elia;" and which is veritably related in the following letter of Lamb, which is curious, as containing the germ of that delightful article, and the first sketches of the Brandy-and-Water Doctor therein celebrated as miraculous.

TO MRS. HAZLITT.

"November, 1823.

"Dear Mrs. H.,—Sitting down to write a letter is such a painful operation to Mary, that you must accept me as her proxy. You have seen our house. What I now tell you is literally true. Yesterday week, George Dyer called upon us, at one o'clock (*bright noon day*), on his way to dine with Mrs. Barbauld, at Newington. He sat with Mary about half an hour, and took leave. The maid saw him go out from her kitchen window, but suddenly losing sight of him, ran up in a fright to Mary. G. D., instead of keeping the slip that leads to the gate, had deliberately, staff in hand, in broad open day, marched into the New River. He had not his spectacles on, and you know his absence. Who helped him out they can hardly tell, but between 'em they got him out, drenched through and through. A mob collected by that time, and accompanied him in. 'Send for the Doctor!' they said; and a one-eyed fellow, dirty and drunk, was fetched from the public-house at the end, where it seems *he lurks*, for the sake of picking up water-practice, having

formerly had a medal from the Humane Society for some rescue. By his advice, the patient was put between blankets; and when I came home at four, to dinner, I found G. D. a-bed, and raving, light-headed, with the brandy-and-water which the doctor had administered. He sung, laughed, whimpered, screamed, babbled of guardian angels, would get up and go home; but we kept him there by force; and by next morning he departed sobered, and seems to have received no injury. All my friends are open-mouthed about having paling before the river, but I cannot see, because an absent man chooses to walk into a river, with his eyes open, at midday, I am any the more likely to be drowned in it, coming home at midnight.

"I have had the honour of dining at the Mansion House, on Thursday last, by special card from the Lord Mayor, who never saw my face, nor I his; and all from being a writer in a magazine! The dinner costly, served on massy plate, Champagne, pines, &c.; forty-seven present, among whom the Chairman, and two other directors of the India Company. There's for you! and got away pretty sober! Quite saved my credit!

"We continue to like our house prodigiously. Our kind remembrances to you and yours. Yours truly,

"C. LAMB.

"I am pleased that H. liked my letter to the Laureate."

Requested by the Quaker Poet to advise him on a proposal for appropriating a large sum of money raised by a few admiring friends to his comfort in advancing years, Lamb gave his wise and genial judgment in the following letter

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"March 24th, 1824.

"Dear B. B.,—I hasten to say that if my opinion can strengthen you in your choice, it is decisive for your acceptance of what has been so handsomely offered. I can see nothing injurious to your most honourable sense. Think that you are called to a poetical ministry—nothing worse—the minister is worthy of the hire. The only objection I feel is founded on a fear that the acceptance may be a temptation to you to let fall the bone (hard as it is) which is in your mouth, and must afford tolerable pickings, for the shadow of independence. You cannot propose to become independent on what the low state of interest could afford

you from such a principal as you mention; and the most graceful excuse for the acceptance would be, that it left you free to your voluntary functions. That is the less *light* part of the scruple. It has no darker shade. I put in *darker*, because of the ambiguity of the word light, which Donne, in his admirable poem on the Metempsychosis, has so ingeniously illustrated in his invocation—

1 2 1 2
'Make my *dark heavy* poem *light* and *light*.'

where two senses of *light* are opposed to different opposites. A trifling criticism. I can see no reason for any scruple then but what arises from your own interest; which is in your own power of course to solve. If you still have doubts, read over Sanderson's Cases of Conscience, and Jeremy Taylor's Ductor Dubitantium, the first a moderate octavo, the latter a folio of 900 close pages, and when you have thoroughly digested the admirable reasons pro and con which they give for every possible case, you will be—just as wise as when you began. Every man is his own best casuist; and after all, as Ephraim Smooth, in the pleasant comedy of 'Wild Oats,' has it, 'there is no harm in a guinea.' A fortiori, there is less in 2000.

"I therefore most sincerely congratulate with you, excepting so far as excepted above. If you have fair prospects of adding to the principal, cut the Bank; but in either case, do not refuse an honest service. Your heart tells you it is not offered to bribe you *from* any duty, but *to* a duty which you feel to be your vocation. Farewell heartily.

"C. L."

The following, with its grotesque sketches, is addressed also

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"December 1st, 1824.

"Dear B. B.,—If Mr. Mitford will send me a full and circumstantial description of his desired vases, I will transmit the same to a gentleman resident at Canton, whom I think I have interest enough in to take the proper care for their execution. But Mr. M. must have patience. China is a great way off, farther perhaps than he thinks; and his next year's roses must be content to wither in a Wedgwood pot. He will please to say whether he should like his Arms upon them, &c. I send herewith some patterns which suggest themselves to me at the first blush of the subject, but he will probably consult his own taste after all.

The last pattern is obviously fitted for ranunculuses only. The two former may indifferently hold daisies, marjoram, sweet-williams, and that sort. My friend in Canton is Inspector of Teas; his name is Ball; and I can think of no better tunnel. I shall expect Mr. M.'s decision.

"Taylor and Hessey, finding their magazine goes off very heavily at 2*s.* 6*d.*, are prudently going to raise their price another shilling; and having already more authors than they want, intend to increase the number of them. If they set up against the New Monthly, they must change their present hands. It is not tying the dead carcase of a Review to a half-dead Magazine will do their business. It is like G. D. multiplying his volumes to make 'em sell better. When he finds one will not go off, he publishes two; two stick, he tries three; three hangs fire, he is confident that four will have a better chance. C. L."

The following letter to Miss Hutchinson, at Torquay, refers to some of Lamb's later articles, published in the "London Magazine," which, in extending its size and pretensions to a three-and-sixpenny miscellany, had lost much of its spirit. He exults, however, in his veracious "Memoir of Liston!"

TO MISS HUTCHINSON.

"The brevity of this is owing to scratching it off at my desk amid expected interruptions. By habit, I can write letters only at office.

"January 20th, 1825.

"Dear Miss H.,—Thank you for a noble goose, which wanted only the massive incrustation that we used to pick-axe open, about this season, in old Gloster Place. When shall we eat another goose pie together? The pheasant, too, must not be forgotten; twice as big, and half as good as a partridge. You ask about the editor of the 'London;' I know of none. This first specimen is flat and pert enough to justify subscribers who grudge t'other shilling. De Quincy's 'Parody' was submitted to him before printed,

and had his *Probatum.** The 'Horns' is in a poor taste, resembling the most laboured papers in the 'Spectator.' I had signed it 'Jack Horner;' but Taylor and Hessey said it would be thought an offensive article unless I put my known signature to it, and wrung from me my slow consent. But did you read the 'Memoir of Liston?' and did you guess whose it was? Of all the lies I ever put off, I value this most. It is from top to toe, every paragraph, pure invention, and has passed for Gospel; has been republished in newspapers, and in the penny play-bills of the night, as an authentic account. I shall certainly go to the naughty man some day for my fibbings. In the next number I figure as a theologian! and have attacked my late brethren, the Unitarians. What Jack Pudding tricks I shall play next, I know not; I am almost at the end of my tether. Coleridge is quite blooming, but his book has not budded yet. I hope I have spelt Torquay right now, and that this will find you all mending, and looking forward to a London flight with the Spring. Winter, *we* have had none, but plenty of foul weather. I have lately picked up an epigram which pleased me:

"'Two noble earls, whom if I quote,
Some folks might call me sinner,
The one invented half a coat,
The other half a dinner.

The plan was good, as some will say,
And fitted to console one;
Because, in this poor starving day,
Few can afford a whole one.'

"I have made the lame one still lamer by imperfect memory; but, spite of bald diction, a little done to it might improve it into a good one. You have nothing else to do at Torquay. Suppose you try it. Well, God bless you all, as wishes Mary most sincerely, with many thanks for letter, &c. ELIA."

The first dawning hope of Lamb's emancipation from the India House is suggested in the following note to Manning, proposing a visit, in which he refers to a certificate of non-capacity for hard desk-work, given by a medical friend.

* Mr. De Quincy had commenced a series of letters in the "London Magazine," "To a Young Man whose education has been neglected," as a vehicle for conveying miscellaneous information in his admirable style. Upon this hint Lamb, with the assent which Mr. De Quincy could well afford to give, contributed a parody on the scheme, in "A Letter to an Old Gentleman whose education has been neglected."

TO MR. MANNING.

"My dear M.,—You might have come inopportunely a week since, when we had an inmate. At present and for as long as *ever* you like, our castle is at your service. I saw T—— yesternight, who has done for me what may

'To all my nights and days to come,
Give solely sovran sway and masterdom.'

But I dare not hope, for fear of disappointment. I cannot be more explicit at present. But I have it under his own hand, that I am *non*-capacitated (I cannot write it *in*-) for business. O joyous imbecility! Not a susurration of this to *anybody!* Mary's love. C. LAMB."

The dream was realized. In April, 1825, the "world-wearied clerk" went home for ever—with what delight has been told in the elaborate raptures of his "Superannuated Man," and in the letters already published. The following may be now added to these, illucidative of his too brief raptures.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Dear W.,—I write post-haste to ensure a frank. Thanks for your hearty congratulations! I may now date from the sixth week of my 'Hegira, or Flight from Leadenhall.' I have lived so much in it, that a summer seems already past; and 'tis but early May yet with you and other people. How I look down on the slaves and drudges of the world! Its inhabitants are a vast cotton-web of spin-spin-spinners! O the carking cares! O the money-grubbers! Sempiternal muckworms!

"Your Virgil I have lost sight of, but suspect it is in the hands of Sir G. Beaumont; I think that circumstance made me shy of procuring it before. Will you write to him about it? and your commands shall be obeyed to a tittle.

"Coleridge has just finished his prize Essay, by which, if it get the prize, he'll touch an additional £100, I fancy. His book, too ('Commentary on Bishop Leighton'), is quite finished, and *penes* Taylor and Hessey.

"In the 'London' which is just out (1st May) are two papers entitled the 'Superannuated Man,' which I wish you to see; and also, 1st April, a little thing called 'Barbara S——,' a story gleaned from Miss Kelly. The S. M., if you can get it, will save my enlargement upon the topic of my manumission.

"I must scribble to make up my *hiatus crumenæ;* for there are so many ways, pious and profligate, of getting rid of money in this vast city and suburbs, that I shall miss my THIRDS. But *couragio!* I despair not. Your kind hint of the cottage was well thrown out; an anchorage for *age* and school of economy, when necessity comes; but without this latter, I have an unconquerable terror of changing place. It does not agree with us. I say it from conviction; else I do sometimes ruralize in fancy.

"Some d—d people are come in, and I must finish abruptly. By d—d I only mean deuced. 'Tis these suitors of Penelope that make it necessary to *authorize* a little for gin and mutton, and such trifles.

"Excuse my abortive scribble.

"Yours, not in more haste than heart, C. L.

"Love and recollects to all the Wms., Doras, Maries round your Wrekin.

"Mary is capitally well. Do write to Sir G. B., for I am shyish of applying to him."

CHAPTER VIII.

Letters of Lamb's last years.—[1825 to 1834.]

How imperfectly the emancipation, so rapturously hailed, fulfilled its promises; how Lamb left Islington for Enfield, and there, after a while, subsided into a lodger; and how, at last, he settled at Edmonton to die, sufficiently appear in the former series of his letters. Those which occupy this chapter, scattered through nine years, have either been subsequently communicated by the kindness of the possessors, or were omitted for some personal reason which has lost its force in time. The following, addressed in 1829 to the Editor, on occasion of his giving to a child the name of "Charles Lamb," though withheld from an indisposition to intrude matters so personal to himself on the reader, may now, on his taking farewell of the subject, find its place.

TO MR. TALFOURD.

"Dear Talfourd,—You could not have told me of a more friendly thing than you have been doing. I am proud of my namesake. I shall take care never to do any dirty ac-

pick pockets, or anyhow get myself hanged, for fear flecting ignominy upon your young Chrisom. I have a motive to be good. I shall not *omnis moriar;* my e borne down the black gulf of oblivion.
. shall survive in eleven letters, five more than Cæsar. ibly I shall come to be knighted, or more! Sir C. L. ɔurd, Bart.!
Yet hath it an authorish twang with it, which will wear with my name for poetry. Give him a smile from me see him. If you do not drop down before, some day e *week after next* I will come and take one night's lodg- with you, if convenient, before you go hence. You . name it. We are in town to-morrow *speciali gratiâ*, ɔy no arrangement can get up near you.
Believe us both, with greatest regards, yours and Mrs. ɔurd's. CHARLES LAMB-PHILO-TALFOURD.
[come as near it as I can."*

'he child who bore the name so honoured by his parents, survived his her only a year, dying at Brighton, whither he had been taken in ıin hope of restoration, on the 3d of December, 1835. Will the reader e the weakness which prompts the desire, in this place, to link their ries together, by inserting a few verses which, having been only pub- at the end of the last small edition of the Editor's dramas, may have d some of the friendly eyes for which they were written?

Our gentle Charles has pass'd away
From earth s short bondage free,
And left to us its leaden day
And mist-enshrouded sea.

Here, by the ocean's terraced side,
Sweet hours of hope were known,
When first the triumph of its tide
Seem'd omen of our own.

That eager joy the sea-breeze gave,
When first it raised his hair,
Sunk with each day's retiring wave,
Beyond the reach of prayer.

The sun-blink that through drizzling mist,
To flickering hope akin,
Lone waves with feeble fondness kiss'd,
No smile as faint can win;

Yet not in vain with radiance weak
The heavenly stranger gleams—
Not of the world it lights to speak,
But that from whence it streams.

That world our patient sufferer sought,
Serene with pitying eyes,
As if his mounting spirit caught
The wisdom of the skies.

With boundless love it look'd abroad
For one bright moment given,

The following eight Letters, evoked by Lamb's excellent and indefatigable correspondent, Barton, speak for themselves :

Shone with a loveliness that awed,
And quiver'd into Heaven.

A year made slow by care and toil
Has paced its weary round,
Since Death enrich'd with kindred spoil
The snow-clad, frost-ribb'd ground.

Then LAMB, with whose endearing name
Our boy we proudly graced,
Shrank from the warmth of sweeter fame
Than ever bard embraced.

Still 'twas a mournful joy to think
Our darling might supply,
For years to us, a living link
With name that cannot die.

And though such fancy gleam no more
On earthly sorrow's night,
Truth's nobler torch unveils the shore
Which lends to both its light.

The nursling there that hand may take,
None ever grasp'd in vain,
And smiles of well-known sweetness wake,
Without their tinge of pain.

Though, 'twixt the child and child-like bard
Late seem'd distinction wide,
They now may trace, in Heaven's regard,
How near they were allied.

Within the infant's ample brow
Blithe fancies lay unfurl'd,
Which all uncrush'd may open now
To charm a sinless world.

Though the soft spirit of those eyes
Might ne'er with LAMB's compete—
Ne'er sparkle with a wit as wise,
Or melt in tears, as sweet,

The nursling's unforgotten look
A kindred love reveals,
With his who never friend forsook,
Or hurt a thing that feels.

In thought profound, in wildest glee,
In sorrow's lengthening range,
His guileless soul of infancy
Endured no spot or change.

From traits of each our love receives
For comfort nobler scope ;
While light which child-like genius leaves
Confirms the infant's hope :

And in that hope with sweetness fraught
Be aching hearts beguiled,
To blend in one delightful thought
The Poet and the Child !

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"July 2d, 1825.

"My dear B. B.,—My nervous attack has so unfitted me that I have not courage to sit down to a letter. My poor pittance in the 'London' you will see is drawn from my sickness. Your book is very acceptable to me, because most of it is new to me; but your book itself we cannot thank you for more sincerely than for the introduction you favoured us with to Anne Knight. Now cannot I write *Mrs.* Anne Knight for the life of me. She is a very pleas— but I won't write all we have said of her so often to ourselves, because I suspect you would read it to her. Only give my sister's and my kindest *remembrances* to her, and how glad we are we can say that word. If ever she come to Southwark again, I count upon another pleasant Bridge walk with her. Tell her I got home time for a rubber; but poor Tryphena will not understand that phrase of the worldlings.

"I am hardly able to appreciate your volume now; but I liked the dedication much, and the apology for your bald burying-grounds. To Shelley, but *that* is not new. To the young vesper-singer, Great Bealings, Playford, and what not?

"If there be a cavil, it is that the topics of religious consolation, however beautiful, are repeated till a sort of triteness attends them. It seems as if you were for ever losing friends' children by death, and reminding their parents of the Resurrection. Do children die so often, and so good in your parts? The topic taken from the consideration that they are snatched away from *possible vanities* seems hardly sound; for to an Omniscient eye their conditional failings must be one with their actual; but I am too unwell for theology. Such as I am, I am yours and A. K.'s truly,

"C. LAMB."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"August 10th, 1825.

"We shall be soon again at Colebrook.

"Dear B. B.,—You must excuse my not writing before, when I tell you we are on a visit at Enfield, where I do not feel it natural to sit down to a letter. It is at all times an exertion. I had rather talk with you, and Anne Knight, quietly at Colebrook Lodge, over the matter of your last. You mistake me when you express misgivings about my

relishing a series of scriptural poems. I wrote confusedly; what I meant to say was, that one or two consolatory poems on deaths would have had a more condensed effect than many. Scriptural, devotional topics admit of infinite variety. So far from poetry tiring me because religious, I can read, and I say it seriously, the homely old version of the Psalms in our Prayer-books for an hour or two together sometimes without sense of weariness.

"I did not express myself clearly about what I think a false topic insisted on so frequently in consolatory addresses on the death of infants. I know something like it is in Scripture, but I think humanly spoken. It is a natural thought, a sweet fallacy to the survivors, but still a fallacy. If it stands on the doctrine of this being a probationary state, it is liable to this dilemma. Omniscience, to whom possibility must be clear as act, must know of the child what it would hereafter turn out: if good, then the topic is false to say it is secured from falling into future wilfulness, vice, &c. If bad, I do not see how its exemption from certain future overt acts, by being snatched away, at all tells in its favour. You stop the arm of a murderer, or arrest the finger of a pickpurse, but is not the guilt incurred as much by the intent as if never so much acted? Why children are hurried off, and old reprobates of a hundred left, whose trial humanly we may think was complete at fifty, is among the obscurities of Providence. The very notion of a state of probation has darkness in it. The All-knower has no need of satisfying his eyes by seeing what we will do, when he knows before what we will do. Methinks we might be condemned before commission. In these things we grope and flounder, and if we can pick up a little human comfort that the child taken is snatched from vice (no great compliment to it, by-the-by), let us take it. And as to where an untried child goes, whether to join the assembly of its elders who have borne the heat of the day—fire-purified martyrs and torment-sifted confessors — what know we? We promise heaven, methinks, too cheaply, and assign large revenues to minors incompetent to manage them. Epitaphs run upon this topic of consolation, till the very frequency induces a cheapness. Tickets for admission into Paradise are sculptured out at a penny a letter, twopence a syllable, &c. It is all a mystery, and the more I try to express my meaning (having none that is clear), the more I flounder. Finally, write what your own conscience, which to you is the unerring judge, deems best, and be careless about the whim-

sies of such a half-baked notionist as I am. We are here in a most pleasant country, full of walks, and idle to our hearts' desire. Taylor has dropped the 'London.' It was indeed a dead weight. It has got in the Slough of Despond. I shuffle off my part of the pack, and stand like Christian with light and merry shoulders. It had got silly, indecorous, pert, and everything that is bad. Both our kind *remembrances* to Mrs. K. and yourself, and strangers'-greeting to Lucy—is it Lucy or Ruth?—that gathers wise sayings in a Book. C. LAMB."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"1826.

"Dear B. B.,—I don't know why I have delayed so long writing. 'Twas a fault. The under current of excuse to my mind was that I had heard of the vessel in which Mitford's jars were to come; that it had been obliged to put into Batavia to refit (which accounts for its delay), but was daily expected. Days are past, and it comes not, and the mermaids may be drinking their tea out of his china for aught I know; but let's hope not. In the mean time I have paid £28, &c., for the freight and prime cost. But do not mention it. I was enabled to do it by a receipt of £30 from Colburn, with whom, however, I have done. I should else have run short. For I just make ends meet. We will wait the arrival of the trinkets, and to ascertain their full expense, and then bring in the bill.

"Colburn had something of mine in last month, which he has had in hand these seven months, and had lost, or couldn't find room for: I was used to different treatment in the 'London,' and have forsworn periodicals. I am going through a course of reading at the Museum: the Garrick plays, out of part of which I have formed my specimens. I have two thousand to go through; and in a few weeks have dispatched the tythe of 'em. It is a sort of office to me; hours, ten to four, the same. It does me good. Man must have regular occupation, that has been used to it.

"Will you pardon my neglect? Mind, again I say, don't show this to M.; let me wait a little longer to know the event of his luxuries. Heaven send him his jars uncrack'd, and me my—

"Yours, with kindest wishes to your daughter and friend, in which Mary joins, C. L."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"1826.

"Dear B. B.,—The *Busy Bee*, as Hood after Dr. Watts apostrophizes thee, and well dost thou deserve it for thy labours in the Muses' gardens, wandering over parterres of Think-on-mes and Forget-me-nots, to a total impossibility of forgetting thee—thy letter was acceptable, thy scruples may be dismissed, thou art *rectus in curiâ*, not a word more to be said, *verbum sapienti*, and so forth, the matter is decided with a white stone, classically, mark me, and the apparitions vanish'd which haunted me, only the cramp, Caliban's distemper, clawing me in the calvish part of my nature, makes me ever and anon roar bullishly, squeak cowardishly, and limp cripple-ishly. Do I write Quakerly and simply, 'tis my most Master Mathews' like intention to do it. See Ben Jonson.—I think you told me your acquaintance with the Drama was confined to Shakspeare and Miss Baillie: some read only Milton and Croly. The gap is as from an ananas to a turnip. I have fighting in my head the plots, characters, situations, and sentiments of 400 old plays (bran new to me), which I have been digesting at the Museum, and my appetite sharpens to twice as many more, which I mean to course over this winter. I can scarce avoid dialogue fashion in this letter. I soliloquize my meditations, and habitually speak dramatic blank verse without meaning it. Do you see Mitford? He will tell you something of my labours. Tell him I am sorry to have missed seeing him, to have talked over those old Treasures. I am still more sorry for his missing Pots. But I shall be sure of the earliest intelligence of the Lost Tribes. His Sacred Specimens are a thankful addition to my shelves. Marry, I could wish he had been more careful of corrigenda. I have discovered certain which have slipt his errata. I put 'em in the next page, as perhaps thou canst transmit them to him. For what purpose, but to grieve him (which yet I should be sorry to do), but then it shows my learning, and the excuse is complimentary, as it implies their correction in a future edition. His own things in the book are magnificent, and as an old Christ's Hospitaller I was particularly refreshed with his eulogy on our Edward. Many of the choice excerpta were new to me. Old Christmas is a coming, to the confusion of Puritans, Muggletonians, Anabaptists, Quakers, and that unwassailing crew. He cometh not with his wonted gait; he is shrunk nine inches

in his girth, but is yet a lusty fellow. Hood's book is mighty clever, and went off 600 copies the first day. Sion's Songs do not disperse so quickly. The next leaf is for Rev. J. M. In this adieu, thine briefly, in a tall friendship,

"C. LAMB."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"June 11, 1827.

"Dear B. B.,—Martin's 'Belshazzar' (the picture) I have seen. Its architectural effect is stupendous, but the human figures, the squalling contorted little antics that are playing at being frightened, like children at a sham ghost, who half know it to be a mask, are detestable. Then the *letters* are nothing more than a transparency lighted up, such as a Lord might order to be lit up on a sudden at a Christmas gambol, to scare the ladies. The *type* is as plain as Baskerville's —they should have been dim, full of mystery, letters to the mind rather than the eye.

"Rembrandt has painted only Belshazzar and a courtier or two (taking a part of the banquet for the whole), not fribbled out a mob of fine folks. Then every thing is so distinct, to the very necklaces, and that foolish little prophet. What *one* point is there of interest? The ideal of such a subject is, that you the spectator should see nothing but what at the time you would have seen—the *hand*, and the *King*—not to be at leisure to make tailor-remarks on the dresses, or, Dr. Kitchener-like, to examine the good things at table.

"Just such a confused piece is his 'Joshua,' frittered into a thousand fragments, little armies here, little armies there —you should see only the *Sun* and *Joshua*. If I remember, he has not left out that luminary entirely, but for Joshua, I was ten minutes a finding him out. Still he is showy in all that is not the human figure or the preternatural interest; but the first are below a drawing-school girl's attainment, and the last is a phantasmagoric trick—'Now you shall see what you shall see, dare is Balshazar and dare is Daniel.'

"You have my thoughts of M., and so adieu!

"C. LAMB."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"1827.

"My dear B. B.,—You will understand my silence when I tell you that my sister, on the very eve of entering into a

new house we have taken at Enfield, was surprised with an attack of one of her sad long illnesses, which deprive me of her society, though not of her domestication, for eight or nine weeks together. I see her, but it does her no good. But for this, we have the snuggest, most comfortable house, with every thing most compact and desirable. Colebrook is a wilderness. The books, prints, &c., are come here, and the New River came down with us. The familiar prints, the bust, the Milton, seem scarce to have changed their rooms. One of her last observations was 'how frightfully like this room is to our room in Islington'—our up-stairs room, she meant. How I hope you will come some better day, and judge of it! We have tried quiet here for four months, and I will answer for the comfort of it enduring.

"On emptying my bookshelves I found a Ulysses, which I will send to A. K. when I go to town, for her acceptance —unless the book be out of print. One likes to have one copy of every thing one does. I neglected to keep one of 'Poetry for Children,' the joint production of Mary and me, and it is not to be had for love or money. It had in the title-page 'by the Author of Mrs. Lester's School.' Know you any one that has it, and would exchange it?

"Strolling to Waltham Cross the other day, I hit off these lines. It is one of the crosses which Edward I. caused to be built for his wife at every town where her corpse rested between Northamptonshire and London.

> "A stately cross each sad spot doth attest,
> Whereat the corpse of Eleanor did rest,
> From Herdby fetch'd—her spouse so honour'd her—
> To sleep with royal dust at Westminster.
> And, if less pompous obsequies were thine,
> Duke Brunswick's daughter, princely Caroline,
> Grudge not, great ghost, nor count thy funeral losses:
> Thou in thy life-time hadst thy share of crosses.

"My dear B. B., my head aches with this little excursion. Pray accept two sides for three for once, and believe me

"Yours sadly, C. L.

"Chase Side, Enfield."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"1827.

"My dear B.,—We are all pretty well again and comfortable, and I take a first opportunity of sending the Adventures of Ulysses, hoping that among us—Homer, Chapman, and Co.—we shall afford you some pleasure. I fear it is out of print; if not, A. K. will accept it, with wishes it were bigger; if another copy is not to be had, it reverts

to me and my heirs *for ever*. With it I send a trumpery book; to which, without my knowledge, the editor of the Bijoux has contributed Lucy's verses; I am ashamed to ask her acceptance of the trash accompanying it. Adieu to Albums—for a great while—I said when I came here, and had not been fixed for two days, but my landlord's daughter (not at the Pot-house) requested me to write in her female friends', and in her own; if I go to ——, thou art there also, O all pervading Album! All over the Leeward Islands, in Newfoundland, and the Back Settlements, I understand there is no other reading. They haunt me. I die of Albophobia! C. L."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"1827.

"My dear B. B.,—A gentleman I never saw before brought me your welcome present—imagine a scraping, fiddling, fidgetting, petit-maitre of a dancing-school advancing into my plain parlour with a coupee and a sideling bow, and presenting the book as if he had been handing a glass of lemonade to a young miss—imagine this, and contrast it with the serious nature of the book presented! Then task your imagination, reserving this picture, to conceive of quite an opposite messenger, a lean, strait-locked, whey-faced Methodist, for such was he in reality who brought it, the Genius (it seems) of the Wesleyan Magazine. Certes, friend B., thy Widow's Tale is too horrible, spite of the lenitives of Religion, to embody in verse; I hold prose to be the appropriate expositor of such atrocities! No offence, but it is a cordial that makes the heart sick. Still, thy skill in compounding it I do not deny. I turn to what gave me less mingled pleasure. I find marked with pencil these pages in thy pretty book, and fear I have been penurious.

"Page 52, 53—Capital.
" 59—6th stanza, exquisite simile.
" 61—11th stanza, equally good.
" 108—3d stanza, I long to see Van Balen.
" 111—A downright good sonnet. *Dixi.*
" 153—Lines at the bottom.

So you see, I read, hear, and *mark*, if I don't learn. In short, this little volume is no discredit to any of your former, and betrays none of the senility you fear about. Apropos of Van Balen, an artist who painted me lately, had painted a blackamoor praying, and not filling his canvass, stuffed in

his little girl aside of blackey, gaping at him unmeaningly; and then didn't know what to call it. Now, for a picture to be promoted to the Exhibition (Suffolk-street) as *Historical*, a subject is requisite. What does me? I but christen it the 'Young Catechist,' and furbished it with dialogue following, which dubbed it an Historical Painting. Nothing to a friend at need.

"While this tawny Ethiop prayeth,
Painter, who is she that stayeth
By, with skin of whitest lustre;
Sunny locks, a shining cluster;
Saint-like seeming to direct him
To the Power that must protect him?
Is she of the heav'n-born Three,
Meek Hope, strong Faith, sweet Charity?
Or some Cherub?

They you mention
Far transcend my weak invention.
'Tis a simple Christian child,
Missionary young and mild,
From her store of script'ral knowledge
(Bible-taught, without a college),
Which by reading she could gather,
Teaches him to say Our Father
To the common Parent, who
Colour not respects, nor hue.
White and black in him have part,
Who looks not to the skin, but heart.

When I'd done it, the artist (who had clapped in Miss merely as a fill-space) swore I expressed his full meaning, and the damosel bridled up into a missionary's vanity. I like verses to explain pictures; seldom pictures to illustrate poems. Your woodcut is a rueful lignum mortis. By-the-by, is the widow likely to marry again?

"I am giving the fruit of my old play-reading at the Museum to Hone, who sets forth a portion weekly in the Table Book. Do you see it? How is Mitford? I'll just hint that the pitcher, the cord, and the bowl are a little too often repeated (passim) in your book, and that in page 17, last line but 4, *him* is put for *he;* but the poor widow, I take it, had small leisure for grammatical niceties. Don't you see there's *he, myself,* and *him;* why not both *him?* likewise *imperviously* is cruelly spelt *imperiously*. These are trifles, and I honestly like your book and you for giving it, though I really am ashamed of so many presents. I can think of no news, therefore I will end with mine and Mary's kindest remembrances to you and yours, C. L."

While Lamb was residing at Enfield, the friendship which,

in 1824, he had formed with Mr. Moxon, led to very frequent intercourse, destined, in after years, to be rendered habitual by the marriage of his friend with the young lady whom he regarded almost as a daughter. In 1828, Mr. Moxon, at the request of Mr. Hurst, of the firm of Hurst, Chance, and Co., applied to Lamb to supply an article for the "Keepsake," which he, always disliking the flimsy elegancies of the Annuals—sadly opposed to his own exclusive taste for old, standard, moth-eaten books—thus declined:

TO MR. MOXON.

"March 19th, 1828.

"My dear M.,—It is my firm determination to have nothing to do with 'Forget-me-Nots'—pray excuse me as civilly as you can to Mr. Hurst. I will take care to refuse any other applications. The things which Pickering has, if to be had again, I have promised absolutely, you know, to poor Hood, from whom I had a melancholy epistle yesterday; besides that, Emma has decided objections to her own and her friend's Album verses being published; but if she gets over that, they are decidedly Hood's.

"Till we meet, farewell. Loves to Dash.* C. L."

The following introduced Mr. Patmore to Mr. Moxon:

TO MR. MOXON.

"May 3d, 1828.

"Dear M.,—My friend Patmore, author of the 'Months,' a very pretty publication—of sundry Essays in the 'London,' 'New Monthly,' &c., wants to dispose of a volume or two of 'Tales.' Perhaps they might chance to suit Hurst; but, be that as it may, he will call upon you, *under favour of my recommendation;* and as he is returning to France, where he lives, if you can do anything for him in the Treaty line, to save him dancing over the Channel every week, I am sure you will. I said I'd never trouble you again; but how vain are the resolves of mortal man! P. is a very hearty, friendly good fellow, and was poor John Scott's second, as I will be yours when you want one. May you never be mine!

"Yours truly, C. L.

"Enfield."

* The great dog, which was, at one time, the constant companion of his long walks.

The following letter exemplifies some of the most remarkable peculiarities of thought and intellectual sentiment which streaked, without darkening, Lamb's evening of life.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"March 25th, 1829.

"Dear B. B.,—I have just come from town, where I have been to get my bit of quarterly pension, and have brought home, from stalls in Barbican, the old 'Pilgrim's Progress,' with the prints—Vanity Fair, &c.—now scarce. Four shillings. Cheap. And also one of whom I have oft heard and had dreams, but never saw in the flesh—that is, in sheepskin—'The whole theologic works of

Thomas Aquinas!'

My arms ached with lugging it a mile to the stage, but the burden was a pleasure, such as old Anchises was to the shoulders of Æneas—or the Lady to the Lover in old romance, who, having to carry her to the top of a high mountain—the price of obtaining her—clambered with her to the top, and fell dead with fatigue.

'O, the glorious old Schoolmen!'

There must be something in him. Such great names imply greatness. Who hath seen Michael Angelo's things—of us that never pilgrimaged to Rome—and yet which of us disbelieves his greatness? How I will revel in his cobwebs and subtleties till my brain spins!

"N.B.—I have writ in the old Hamlet—offer it to Mitford in my name, if he have not seen it. 'Tis woefully below our editions of it. But keep it, if you like.

"I do not mean this to go for a letter, only to apprize you that the parcel is booked for you this 25th of March, 1829, from the Four Swans, Bishopsgate. With both our loves to Lucy and A. K., Yours ever, C. L."

The following notes, undated, but of about 1829, were addressed to Coleridge, under the genial care of Mr. Gilman at Highgate:

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Dear C.,—Your sonnet is capital. The paper ingenious,* only that it split into four parts (besides a side splinter) in the carriage. I have transferred it to the common English paper, *manufactured of rags*, for better preservation. I never

* Some gauzy tissue paper on which the sonnet was copied.

knew before how the 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey' were written. 'Tis strikingly corroborated by observations on Cats. These domestic animals, put 'em on a rug before the fire, wink their eyes up, and listen to the kettle, and then purr, which is *their* poetry.

"On Sunday week we kiss your hands (if they are clean). This next Sunday I have been engaged for some time.

"With remembrances to your good host and hostess,

"Yours ever, C. LAMB."

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"My dear Coleridge,—With pain and grief, I must entreat you to excuse us on Thursday. My head, though externally correct, has had a severe concussion in my long illness, and the very idea of an engagement hanging over for a day or two forbids my rest, and I get up miserable. I am not well enough for company. I do assure you, no other thing prevents me coming. I expect —— and his brothers this or to-morrow evening, and it worries me to death that I am not ostensibly ill enough to put 'em off. I will get better, when I shall hope to see your nephew. He will come again. Mary joins in best love to the Gilmans. Do, I earnestly entreat you, excuse me. I assure you again that I am not fit to go out yet.

"Yours (though shattered), C. LAMB.

"Tuesday."

The next two *notelets* are addressed to Coleridge's excellent host, on the occasion of borrowing and returning the works of Fuller:

TO MR. GILMAN.

"Pray trust me with the 'Church History,' as well as the 'Worthies.' A moon shall restore both. Also give me back 'Him of Aquinum.' In return, you have the *light of my countenance.** Adieu.

"P.S.—A sister also of mine comes with it. A son of Nimshi drives her. Their driving will have been furious, impassioned. Pray God they have not toppled over the tunnel! I promise you I fear their steed, bred out of the wind without father, semi-Melchisedecish, hot, phaetontic. From my country lodgings at Enfield. C. L."

* A sketch of Lamb, by an amateur artist.

TO MR. GILMAN.

"Dear Gilman,—Pray do you, or S. T. C., immediately write to say you have received back the golden works of the dear, fine, silly old angel, which I part from, bleeding, and to say how the winter has used you all.

"It is our intention soon, weather permitting, to come over for a day at Highgate; for beds, we will trust to the Gate-House, should you be full: tell me if we may come casually, for in this change of climate there is no naming a day for walking. With best loves to Mrs. Gilman, &c.,

"Yours, mopish but in health, C. LAMB.

"I shall be uneasy till I hear of Fuller's safe arrival."

The following two letters, addressed to Mr. H. C. Robinson, when afflicted with rheumatism, are in Lamb's wildest strain of mirth. In the first, he pretends to endure all the pain he believes his friend to be suffering, and attributes it to his own incautious habits; in the second, he attributes the suffering to his friend in a strain of exaggeration, probably intended to make the reality more tolerable by comparison:

TO MR. H. C. ROBINSON.

"April 10th, 1829.

"Dear Robinson,—We are afraid you will slip from us from England without again seeing us. It would be charity to come and see me. I have these three days been laid up with strong rheumatic pains, in loins, back, shoulders. I shriek sometimes from the violence of them. I get scarce any sleep, and the consequence is, I am restless, and want to change sides as I lie, and I cannot turn without resting on my hands, and so turning all my body all at once, like a log with a lever. While this rainy weather lasts, I have no hope of alleviation. I have tried flannels and embrocation in vain. Just at the hip joint the pangs sometimes are so excruciating that I cry out. It is as violent as the cramp, and far more continuous. I am ashamed to whine about these complaints to you, who can ill enter into them; but indeed they are sharp. You go about, in rain or fine, at all hours, without discommodity. I envy you your immunity at a time of life not much removed from my own. But you owe your exemption to temperance, which it is too late for me to pursue. I, in my lifetime, have had my good things; hence my frame is brittle—yours strong as brass.

I never knew any ailment you had. You can go out at night in all weathers, sit up all hours. Well, I don't want to moralize; I only wish to say that if you are inclined to a game at double-dumby, I would try and bolster up myself in a chair for a rubber or so. My days are tedious, but less so, and less painful, than my nights. May you never know the pain and difficulty I have in writing so much! Mary, who is most kind, joins in the wish. C. LAMB."

THE COMPANION LETTER TO THE SAME
(A WEEK AFTERWARD).

"I do confess to mischief. It was the subtlest diabolical piece of malice heart of man has contrived. I have no more rheumatism than that poker. Never was freer from all pains and aches. Every joint sound, to the tip of the ear from the extremity of the lesser toe. The report of thy torments was blown circuitously here from Bury. I could not resist the jeer. I conceived you writhing when you should just receive my congratulations. How mad you'd be. Well, it is not in my method to inflict pangs. I leave that to Heaven. But in the existing pangs of a friend I have a share. His disquietude crowns my exemption. I imagine you howling, and pace across the room, shooting out my free arms, legs, &c., /\/\/ this way and that way, with an assurance of not kindling a spark of pain from them. I deny that Nature meant us to sympathize with agonies. Those face-contortions, retortions, distortions, have the merriness of antics. Nature meant them for farce — not so pleasant to the actor, indeed; but Grimaldi cries when we laugh, and 'tis but one that suffers to make thousands rejoice.

"You say that shampooing is ineffectual. But, *per se*, it is good, to show the introvolutions, extravolutions, of which the animal frame is capable—to show what the creature is receptible of, short of dissolution.

"You are worst of nights, an't you? You never was rack'd, was you? I should like an authentic map of those feelings.

"You seem to have the flying gout. You can scarcely screw a smile out of your face, can you? I sit at immunity and sneer *ad libitum*. 'Tis now the time for you to make good resolutions. I may go on breaking 'em for anything the worse I find myself. Your doctor seems to keep you on the long cure. Precipitate healings are never good. Don't come while you are so bad; I sha'n't be able to at-

tend to your throes and the dumby at once. I should like to know how slowly the pain goes off. But don't write, unless the motion will be likely to make your sensibility more exquisite.

"Your affectionate and truly healthy friend,

"C. LAMB.

"Mary thought a letter from me might amuse you in your torment."

The illness of Mr. Barton's daughter drew from Lamb the following expression of kindred loneliness and sorrow:

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"July 3d, 1829.

"Dear B. B.,—I am very much grieved indeed for the indisposition of poor Lucy. Your letter found me in domestic troubles. My sister is again taken ill, and I am obliged to remove her out of the house for many weeks, I fear, before I can hope to have her again. I have been very desolate indeed. My loneliness is a little abated by our young friend Emma having just come here for her holydays, and a schoolfellow of hers that was with her. Still the house is not the same, though she is the same. Mary had been pleasing herself with the prospect of seeing her at this time; and with all their company, the house feels at times a frightful solitude. May you and I in no very long time have a more cheerful theme to write about, and congratulate upon a daughter's and a sister's perfect recovery. Do not be long without telling me how Lucy goes on. I have a right to call her by her Quaker name, you know. Emma knows that I am writing to you, and begs to be remembered to you with thankfulness for your ready contribution. Her album is filling apace. But of her contributors, one, almost the flower of it, a most amiable young man and late acquaintance of mine, has been carried off by consumption, on return from one of the Azores Islands, to which he went with hopes of mastering the disease, came back improved, went back to a most close and confined counting-house, and relapsed. His name was Dibdin, grandson of the Songster. C. L."

The following graphic sketch of the happy temperament of one of Lamb's intimate friends, now no more, is contained in a letter to

MR. WORDSWORTH.

"A—— is well, and in harmony with himself and the world. I don't know how he, and those of his constitution, keep their nerves so nicely balanced as they do. Or, have they any? Or, are they made of packthread? He is proof against weather, ingratitude, meat underdone, every weapon of Fate. I have just now a jagged end of a tooth pricking against my tongue, which meets it half way, in a wantonness of provocation; and there they go at it, the tongue pricking itself, like the viper against the file, and the tooth galling all the gum inside and out to torture; tongue and tooth, tooth and tongue, hard at it; and I to pay the reckoning, till all my mouth is as hot as brimstone; and I'd venture the roof of my mouth, that at this moment, at which I conjecture my full-happinessed friend is picking his crackers, that no one of the double rows of ivory in his privileged mouth has as much as a flaw in it, but all perform their functions, and, having performed them, expect to be picked (luxurious steeds!), and rubbed down. I don't think he could be robbed, or have his house set on fire, or even want money. I have heard him express a similar opinion of his own infallibility. I keep acting here Heautontimorumenos.

* * * * * * *

"Have you seen a curious letter in the Morning Chronicle, by C. L.,* the genius of absurdity, respecting Bonaparte's suing out his Habeas Corpus? That man is his own moon. He has no need of ascending into that gentle planet for mild influences."

In the spring of the year, Mr. Murray, the eminent publisher, through one of Lamb's oldest and most cherished friends, Mr. Ayrton, proposed that he should undertake a continuation of his Specimens of the Old English Dramatists. The proposal was communicated by Mr. Ayrton to Lamb, then at Enfield, and then too painfully anxious for the recovery of Miss Isola, who was dangerously ill in Suffolk, to make the arrangement desired. The following is the reply:

* Capel Lofft, a barrister residing in Suffolk, a well-known Whig and friend of Major Wyvil and Major Cartwright, who sometimes half vexed Lamb by signing, as he had a right, their common initials to a sonnet. He wrote a very vehement letter, contending that the detention of Napoleon on board a vessel off the coast, preparatory to his being sent to St. Helena, was illegal, and that the captain of the vessel would be compelled to surrender him in obedience to a writ of Habeas Corpus.

TO MR. AYRTON.

"Mr. Westwood's, Chase Side, Enfield,
"14th March, 1830.

"My dear Ayrton,—Your letter, which was only not so pleasant as your appearance would have been, has revived some old images; Phillips* (not the Colonel), with his few hairs bristling up at the charge of a revoke, which he declares impossible; the old Captain's significant nod over the right shoulder† (was it not?); Mrs. B——'s determined questioning of the score, after the game was absolutely gone to the d—l; the plain but hospitable cold boiled-beef suppers at sideboard; all which fancies, redolent of middle age and strengthful spirits, come across us ever and anon in this vale of deliberate senectitude, ycleped Enfield.

"You imagine a deep gulf between you and us; and there is a pitiable hiatus in *kind* between St. James's Park and this extremity of Middlesex. But the mere distance in turnpike roads is a trifle. The roof of a coach swings you down in an hour or two. We have a sure hot joint on a Sunday, and when had we better? I suppose you know that ill health has obliged us to give up housekeeping, but we have an asylum at the very next door—only twenty-four inches further from town, which is not material in a country expedition—where a *table d'hôte* is kept for us, without trouble on our parts, and we adjourn after dinner, when one of the old world (old friends) drops casually down among us. Come and find us out, and seal our judicious change with your approbation, whenever the whim bites, or the sun prompts. No need of announcement, for we are sure to be at home.

"I keep putting off the subject of my answer. In truth, I am not in spirits at present to see Mr. Murray on such a business; but pray offer him my acknowledgments, and an assurance that I should like at least one of his propositions, as I have so much additional matter for the SPECIMENS as

* Edward Phillips, Esq., Secretary to the Right Hon. Charles Abbott, Speaker of the House of Commons. The "Colonel" alluded to was the Lieutenant of Marines who accompanied Capt. Cook in his last voyage, and on shore with that great man when he fell a victim to his humanity. On the death of his commander, Lieutenant Phillips, himself wounded, swam off to the boats; but, seeing one of his marines struggling in the water to escape the natives who were pursuing him, gallantly swam back, protected his man at the peril of his own life, and both reached their boat in safety. He afterward married that accomplished and amiable daughter of Dr. Burney, whose name so frequently occurs in the Diary and Correspondence of her sister, Madame D'Arblay.

† Captain (afterward Admiral) James Burney.

might make two volumes in all; or ONE (new edition), omitting such better known authors as Beaumont and Fletcher, Johnson, &c.

"But we are both in trouble at present. A very dear young friend of ours, who passed her Christmas holidays here, has been taken dangerously ill with a fever, from which she is very precariously recovering, and I expect a summons to fetch her when she is well enough to bear the journey from Bury. It is Emma Isola, with whom we got acquainted at our first visit to your sister, at Cambridge, and she has been an occasional inmate with us—and of late years much more frequently—ever since. While she is in this danger, and till she is out of it, and here in a probable way to recovery, I feel that I have no spirits for an engagement of any kind. It has been a terrible shock to us; therefore I beg that you will make my handsomest excuses to Mr. Murray.

"Our very kindest loves to Mrs. A. and the younger A.'s.

"Your unforgotten C. LAMB."

Good tidings soon reached Lamb of Miss Isola's health, and he went to Fornham to bring her, for a month's visit, to Enfield. The following are portions of letters addressed to the lady from whose care he had removed her, after their arrival at home, other parts of which have already been published.

TO MRS. WILLIAMS.

"Enfield, April 2d, 1830.

"Dear Madam,—I have great pleasure in letting you know Miss Isola has suffered very little from fatigue on her long journey; I am ashamed to say that I came home rather the more tired of the two. But I am a very unpractised traveller. We found my sister very well in health, only a little impatient to see her; and, after a few hysterical tears for gladness, all was comfortable again. We arrived here from Epping between five and six.

"How I employed myself between Epping and Enfield, the poor verses in the front of my paper may inform you, which you may please to christen an 'Acrostic in a cross-road,' and which I wish were worthier of the lady they refer to, but I trust you will plead my pardon to her on a subject so delicate as a lady's good *name*. Your candour must acknowledge that they are written straight. And now, dear madam, I have left myself hardly space to express my

sense of the friendly reception I found at Fornham. Mr. Williams will tell you that we had the pleasure of a slight meeting with him on the road, where I could almost have told him, but that it seemed ungracious, that such had been your hospitality, that I scarcely missed the good master of the family at Fornham, though heartily I should have rejoiced to have made a little longer acquaintance with him. I will say nothing of our deeper obligations to both of you, because I think we agreed at Fornham that gratitude may be over-exacted on the part of the obliging, and over-expressed on the part of the obliged person.

* * * * * * *

"Miss Isola is writing, and will tell you that we are going on very comfortably. Her sister is just come. She blames my last verses, as being more written on Mr. Williams than on yourself; but how should I have parted whom a Superior Power has brought together? I beg you will jointly accept of all our best respects, and pardon your obsequious if not troublesome correspondent, C. L.

"P.S.—I am the worst folder-up of a letter in the world, except certain Hottentots, in the land of Caffre, who never fold up their letters at all, writing very badly upon skins, &c."

The following contains Lamb's account of the same journey, addressed to Buxton:

TO MRS. HAZLITT.

"May 24th, 1830.

"Mary's love? Yes. Mary Lamb is quite well.

"Dear Sarah,—I found my way to Northaw on Thursday, and saw a very good woman behind a counter, who says also that you are a very good lady. I did not accept her offered glass of wine (home-made, I take it), but craved a cup of ale, with which I seasoned a slice of cold lamb, from a sandwich box, which I ate in her back parlour, and proceeded for Berkhampstead, &c.; lost myself over a heath, and had a day's pleasure. I wish you could walk as I do, and as you used to do. I am sorry to find you are so poorly; and, now I have found my way, I wish you back at Goody Tomlinson's. What a pretty village 'tis. I should have come sooner, but was waiting a summons to Bury. Well, it came, and I found the good parson's lady (he was from home) exceedingly hospitable.

"Poor Emma, the first moment we were alone, took me into a corner, and said, 'Now, pray, don't *drink*; do check

yourself after dinner, for my sake, and when we get home to Enfield, you shall drink as much as ever you please, and I won't say a word about it.' How I behaved, you may guess, when I tell you that Mrs. Williams and I have written acrostics on each other, and she hoped that she should have 'no reason to regret Miss Isola's recovery, by its depriving *her* of our begun correspondence.' Emma stayed a month with us, and has gone back (in tolerable health) to her long home, for *she* comes not again for a twelvemonth. I amused Mrs. Williams with an occurrence on our road to Enfield.* We travelled with one of those troublesome fellow-passengers in a stage-coach that is called a well-informed man. For twenty miles we discoursed about the properties of steam, probabilities of carriages by ditto, till all my science, and more than all, was exhausted, and I was thinking of escaping my torment by getting up on the outside, when, getting into Bishops Stortford, my gentleman, spying some farming land, put an unlucky question to me: 'What sort of a crop of turnips I thought we should have this year?' Emma's eyes turned to me, to know what in the world I could have to say; and she burst into a violent fit of laughter, maugre her pale, serious cheeks, when, with the greatest gravity, I replied that 'it depended, I believed, upon boiled legs of mutton.' This clenched our conversation, and my gentleman, with a face half wise, half in scorn, troubled us with no more conversation, scientific or philosophical, for the remainder of the journey. S—— was here yesterday, and as *learned* to the full as my fellow-traveller. What a pity that he will spoil a wit, and a most pleasant fellow (as he is), by wisdom. N. Y——† is as good, and as odd as ever. We had a dispute about the word 'heir,' which I contended was pronounced like 'air;' he said that might be in common parlance; or that we might so use it, speaking of the 'Heir-at-Law,' a comedy; but that in the law courts it was necessary to give it the full aspiration, and to say *hayer;* he thought it might even vitiate a cause, if a counsel pronounced it otherwise. In conclusion, he 'would consult Sergeant Wilde,' who gave it against him. Sometimes he falleth into the water; sometimes into the fire. He came down here, and insisted on reading Virgil's 'Eneid' all through with me (which he did), because a counsel must know Latin. Another time

* This little anecdote was told by Lamb in a letter previously published, but not quite so richly as here.

† A very old and dear friend of Lamb who had just been called to the bar.

he read out all the Gospel of St. John, because [illegible] quotations are very emphatic in a court of justice. A third time he would carve a fowl, which he did very ill-favouredly, because 'we did not know how indispensable it was for a barrister to do all those sort of things well! Those little things were of more consequence than we supposed.' So he goes on, harassing about the way to prosperity, and losing it. With a long head, but somewhat a wrong one—harum-scarum. Why does not his guardian angel look to him? He deserves one: maybe he has tired him out.

"I am with this long scrawl, but I thought in your exile you might like a letter. Commend me to all the wonders in Derbyshire, and tell the devil I humbly kiss—my hand to him. Yours ever, C. LAMB.

"Enfield, *Saturday*."

The esteem which Lamb had always cherished for Mr. Rogers was quickened into a livelier feeling by the generous interest which the poet took in the success of Mr. Moxon, who was starting as a publisher. The following little note shows the state of his feelings at this time towards two distinguished persons.

TO MR. MOXON.

"Enfield, Tuesday.

"Dear M.,—I dined with your and my Rogers, at Mr. Cary's, yesterday. Cary consulted me on the proper bookseller to offer a lady's MS. novel to. I said I would write to *you*. But I wish you would call on the translator of Dante, at the British Museum, and talk with him. He is the pleasantest of clergymen. I told him of all Rogers's handsome behaviour to you, and you are already no stranger. Go! I made Rogers laugh about your Nightingale Sonnet, not having heard one. 'Tis a good sonnet, notwithstanding. You shall have the books shortly.

"C. L."

The petty criticisms on the small volume of "Album Verses," by which a genial trifle, intended to mark the commencement of the career of a dear friend, was subjected to absurd severity, and which called forth a little indignant poem from the Laureate, provoked the following notice from Lamb, in a letter addressed

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"August 30th, 1830.

"Dear B. B.,—My address is 34 Southampton Buildings, Holborn. For God's sake do not let me be pestered with Annuals. They are all rogues who edit them, and something else who write in them. I am still alone, and very much out of sorts, and cannot spur up my mind to writing. The sight of one of those year-books makes me sick. I get nothing by any of 'em, not even a copy.

"Thank you for your warm interest about my little volume, for the critics on which I care the five hundred thousandth part of the tythe of a half-farthing. I am too old a militant for that. How noble, though, in R. S.,* to come forward for an old friend, who had treated him so unworthily.

"Moxon has a shop without customers, I a book without readers. But what a clamour against a poor collection of Album verses, as if we had put forth an Epic. I cannot scribble a long letter. I am, when not at foot, very desolate, and take no interest in anything, scarce hate anything, but Annuals. I am in an interregnum of thought and feeling. What a beautiful autumn morning this is, if it was but with me as in times past, when the candle of the Lord shined round me. I cannot even muster enthusiasm to admire the French heroism. In better times I hope we may some day meet, and discuss an old poem or two. But if you'd have me not sick, no more of Annuals.

"C. L., Ex-Elia.

"Love to Lucy and A. K. always."

In 1830, Lamb tried the experiment of lodging a little while in London; but Miss Lamb's malady compelled him to return to the solitude of Enfield. He thus communicates the sad state of his sister:

TO MR. MOXON.

"Dear Moxon,—I have brought my sister to Enfield, being sure that she had no hope of recovery in London. Her state of mind is deplorable beyond any example. I almost fear whether she has strength at her time of life ever to get out of it. Here she must be nursed, and neither see nor hear of anything in the world out of her sick chamber. The mere hearing that Southey had called at our lodgings

* Robert Southey.

totally upset her. Pray see him, or hear of him at Mr. Rickman's, and excuse my not writing to him. I dare not write, or receive a letter in her presence; every little task so agitates her. Westwood will receive any letter for me, and give it me privately.

"Pray assure Southey of my kindliest feelings towards him, and, if you do not see him, send this to him.

"Kindest remembrances to your sister, and believe me ever yours, C. LAMB.

"Remember me kindly to the Allsops."

The following curious piece of modern Latin was addressed

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"April, 1831.

"Vir Bone!—Recepi literas tuas amicissimas, et in mentem venit responsuro mihi, vel raro, vel nunquam, inter nos intercedisse Latinam linguam, organum rescribendi, loquendive. Epistolæ tuæ, Plinianis elegantiis (supra quod TREMULO deceat) refertæ, tam a verbis Plinianis adeo abhorrent, ut ne vocem quamquam (Romanam scilicet) habere videaris, quam 'ad canem,' ut aiunt, 'rejectare possis.' Forsan desuetudo Latinissandi ad vernaculam linguam usitandam, plusquam opus sit, coegit. Per adagia quædam nota, et in ore omnium pervulgata, ad Latinitatis perditæ recuperationem revocare te institui.

"Felis in abaco est, et ægrè videt.

"Omne quod splendet nequaquam aurum putes.

"Imponas equo mendicum, equitabit idem ad diabolum.

"Fur commodè a fure prenditur.

"O MARIA, MARIA, valdè CONTRARIA, quomodo crescit hortulus tuus?

"Nunc majora canamus.

"Thomas, Thomas, de Islington, uxorem duxit die nuperâ Dominicâ. Reduxit domum posterâ. Succedenti baculum emit. Postridie ferit illam. Ægrescit illa subsequenti. Proximâ (nempe Veneris) est mortua. Plurimum gestiit Thomas, quòd appropinquanti Sabbato efferenda sit.

"Horner quidam Johannulus in angulo sedebat, artocreas quasdam deglutiens. Inseruit pollices, pruna nana evellens, et magnâ voce exclamavit 'Dii boni, quàm bonus puer fio!'

"Diddle-diddle-dumkins! meus unicus filius Johannes cubitum ivit, integris braccis, caligâ unâ tantùm, indutus. *Diddle*-diddle, &c. DA CAPO.

"Hic adsum saltans Joannula. Cum nemo adsit mihi, semper resto sola.

"Ænigma mihi hoc solvas, et Œdipus fies.

"Quâ ratione assimulandus sit equus TREMULO?

"Quippe cui tota communicatio sit per HAY et NEIGH, juxta consilium illud Dominicum, 'Fiat omnis communicatio vestra YEA et NAY.'

"In his nugis caram diem consumo, dum invigilo valetudini carioris nostræ Emmæ, quæ apud nos jamdudum ægrotat. Salvere vos jubet mecum Maria mea, ipsa integrâ valetudine. ELIA.

"Ab agro Enfeldiense datum, Aprilis nescio quibus Calendis—Davus sum, non Calendarius.

"P.S.—Perdita in toto est Billa Reformatura."

Mr. Moxon, having become the publisher of "The Englishman's Magazine," obtained Lamb's aid, as a contributor of miscellaneous articles, which were arranged to appear under the comprehensive title of "Peter's Net." The following accompanied his first contribution, in which some reminiscences of the Royal Academy were enshrined.

TO MR. MOXON.

"August, 1831.

"Dear M.,—The *R. A.* here memorized was George Dawe, whom I knew well, and heard many anecdotes of, from DANIELS and WESTALL, at H. Rogers's; *to each of them* it will be well to send a magazine in my name. It will fly like wildfire among the Royal Academicians and artists. Could you get hold of Procter?—his chambers are in Lincoln's Inn, at Montague's; or of Janus Weathercock?—both of their *prose* is capital. Don't encourage poetry. The 'Peter's Net' does not intend funny things only. All is fish. And leave out the sickening 'Elia' at the end. Then it may comprise letters and characters, addressed to Peter; but a signature forces it to be all characteristic of the one man, Elia, or the one man, Peter, which cramped me formerly. I have agreed *not* for my sister to know the subjects I choose till the magazine comes out; so beware of speaking of 'em, or writing about 'em, save generally. Be particular about this warning. Can't you drop in some afternoon, and take a bed? The 'Athenæum' has been hoaxed with some exquisite poetry, that was, two or three months ago, in 'Hone's Book.' I like your first number capitally. But is not it small? Come and see us, week-day if possible.

"Send, or bring me, Hone's number for August. The anecdotes of E. and of G. D. are substantially true; what does Elia (or Peter) care for dates?

"The poem I mean is in 'Hone's Book,' as far back as April. I do not know who wrote it; but 'tis a poem I envy —*that* and Montgomery's 'Last Man:' I envy the writers, because I feel I could have done something like them.

"C. L."

The following contains Lamb's characteristic acknowledgment of a payment on account of these contributions.

TO MR. MOXON.

"Sept. 5th, 1831.

"Dear M.,—Your letter's contents pleased me. I am only afraid of taxing you. Yet I want a stimulus, or I think I should drag sadly. I shall keep the moneys in trust till I see you fairly over the next 1st January. Then I shall look upon 'em as earned. No part of your letter gave me more pleasure (no, not the £10, though you may grin) than that you will revisit old Enfield, which I hope will be always a pleasant idea to you.

"Yours very faithfully, C. L."

The magazine, although enriched with Lamb's articles, and some others of great merit, did not meet with a success so rapid as to requite the proprietor for the labour and anxiety of its production. The following is Lamb's letter, in reply to one announcing a determination to discontinue its publication:

TO MR. MOXON.

"Oct. 24th, 1831.

"To address an abdicated monarch is a nice point of breeding. To give him his lost titles is to mock him; to withhold 'em is to wound him. But his minister, who falls with him, may be gracefully sympathetic. I do honestly feel for your diminution of honours, and regret even the pleasing cares which are part and parcel of greatness. Your magnanimous submission, and the cheerful tone of your renunciation, in a letter, which, without flattery, would have made an 'ARTICLE,' and which, rarely as I keep letters, shall be preserved, comfort me a little. Will it please, or plague you, to say that when your parcel came I cursed *it, for* my pen was warming in my hand at a ludicrous

description of a landscape of an R. A., which I calculated upon sending you to-morrow, the last day you gave me? Now any one calling in, or a letter coming, puts an end to my writing for the day. Little did I think that the mandate had gone out, so destructive to my occupation, so relieving to the apprehensions of the whole body of R. A.'s; so you see I had not quitted the ship while a plank was remaining.

"To drop metaphors, I am sure you have done wisely. The very spirit of your epistle speaks that you have a weight off your mind. I have one on mine; the cash in hand, which, as ——— less truly says, burns in my pocket. I feel queer at returning it (who does not?), you feel awkward at retaking it (who ought not?): is there no middle way of adjusting this fine embarrassment? I think I have hit upon a medium to skin the sore place over, if not quite to heal it. You hinted that there might be something under £10 by-and-by accruing to me—*Devil's Money** (you are sanguine, say £7 10*s.*); that I entirely renounce, and abjure all future interest in: I insist upon it, and, 'by him I will not name,' I won't touch a penny of it. That will split your loss one half, and leave me conscientious possessor of what I hold. Less than your assent to this, no proposal will I accept of.

"The Rev. Mr. ———, whose name you have left illegible (is it *Seagull?*), never sent me any book on Christ's Hospital, by which I could dream that I was indebted to him for a dedication. Did G. D. send his penny tract to me, to convert me to Unitarianism? Dear, blundering soul! why, I am as old a one Goddite as himself. Or did he think his cheap publication would bring over the Methodists over the way here?† However, I'll give it to the pew-opener, in whom I have a little interest, to hand over to the clerk, whose wife she sometimes drinks tea with, for him to lay before the deacon, who exchanges the civility of the hat with him, for to transmit to the minister, who shakes hands with him out of chapel, and he, in all odds, will light his pipe with it.

"I wish very much to see you. I leave it to you to come how you will; we shall be very glad (we need not repeat) to see your sister, or sisters, with you; but for you, individually, I will just hint that a dropping in to tea, unlooked

* Alluding to a little extravagance of Lamb's—scarcely worth recollecting—in emulation of the "Devil's Walk" of Southey and Co.

† Referring to a chapel opposite his lodging at Enfield.

for, about five, stopping bread-and-cheese and gin-and-water, is worth a thousand Sundays. I am naturally miserable on a Sunday; but a week-day evening and supper is like old times. Set out *now*, and give no time to deliberation.

"P.S.—The second volume of 'Elia' is delightful (ly bound, I mean), and quite cheap. Why, man, 'tis a unique!

"If I write much more I shall expand into an article, which I cannot afford to let you have so cheap. By-the-by, to show the perverseness of human will, while I thought I *must* furnish one of those accursed things monthly, it seemed a labour above Hercules's 'Twelve' in a year, which were evidently monthly contributions. Now I am emancipated, I feel as if I had a thousand Essays swelling within me. False feelings both!

"Your ex-Lampoonist, or Lamb-punnist, from Enfield, October 24, or 'last day but one for receiving articles that can be inserted.'"

The following was addressed soon after

TO MR. MOXON.

"Feb. 1832.

"Dear Moxon,—The snows are ankle-deep, slush, and mire, that 'tis hard to get to the post-office, and cruel to send the maid out. 'Tis a slough of despair, or I should sooner have thanked you for your offer of the '*Life*,' which we shall very much like to have, and will return duly. I do not know when I shall be in town, but in a week or two, at farthest, when I will come as far as you, if I can. We are moped to death with confinement within doors. I send you a curiosity of G. Dyer's tender conscience. Between thirty and forty years since, G. published the 'Poet's Fate,' in which were two very harmless lines about Mr. Rogers, but Mr. R. not quite approving of them, they were left out in a subsequent edition, 1801. But G. has been worrying about them ever since; if I have heard him once, I have heard him a hundred times, express a remorse proportioned to a consciousness of having been guilty of an atrocious libel. As the devil would have it, a man they call Barker, in his 'Parriana,' has quoted the identical two lines, as they stood in some obscure edition anterior to 1801, and the withers of poor G. are again wrung. His letter is a gem; with his poor blind eyes it has been laboured out at six sit*tings*. The history of the couplet is in page 3 of this irreg-

ular production, in which every variety of shape and size that letters can be twisted into is to be found. Do show *his* part of it to Mr. R. some day. If he has bowels, they must melt at the contrition so queerly charactered of a contrite sinner. G. was born, I verily think, without original sin, but chooses to have a conscience, as every Christian gentleman should have; his dear old face is insusceptible of the twist they call a sneer, yet he is apprehensive of being suspected of that ugly appearance. When he makes a compliment, he thinks he has given an affront—a name is personality. But show (no hurry) this unique recantation to Mr. R.; 'tis like a dirty pocket-handkerchief, mucked with tears of some indigent Magdalen. There is the impress of sincerity in every pot-hook and hanger; and then the gilt frame to such a pauper picture! It should go into the Museum.

"Come when the weather will possibly let you; I want to see the Wordsworths, but I do not much like to be all night away. It is dull enough to be here together, but it is duller to leave Mary; in short, it is painful, and in a flying visit I should hardly catch them. I have no beds for them if they came down, and but a sort of a house to receive them in; yet I shall regret their departure unseen; I feel cramped and straitened every way. Where are they?

"We have heard from Emma but once, and that a month ago, and are very anxious for another letter.

"You say we have forgot your powers of being serviceable to us. *That* we never shall; I do not know what I should do without you when I want a little commission. Now then: there are left at Miss Buffon's, the 'Tales of the Castle,' and certain volumes of the 'Retrospective Review.' The first should be conveyed to Novello's, and the Reviews should be taken to Talfourd's office, ground floor, east side, Elm Court, Middle Temple, to whom I should have written, but my spirits are wretched; it is quite an effort to write this. So, with the '*Life*,' I have cut you out three pieces of service. What can I do for you here, but hope to see you very soon, and think of you with most kindness? I fear to-morrow, between rains and snows, it would be impossible to expect you, but do not let a practicable Sunday pass. We are always at home.

"Mary joins in remembrances to your sister, whom we hope to see in any fine-ish weather, when she'll venture.

"Remember us to Allsop, and all the dead people; to whom, and to London, we seem dead."

In February, 1833, the following letter was addressed by Lamb to the editor on his being made Sergeant:

TO MR. SERGEANT TALFOURD.

"My dear T.,—Now cannot I call him *Sergeant;* what is there in a coif? Those canvass-sleeves protective from ink,* when he was a law-chit—a *Chitty*ling (let the leathern apron be apocryphal), do more 'specially plead to the Jury Court of old memory. The costume (will he agnize it?) was as of a desk-fellow, or Socius Plutei. Methought I spied a brother!

"That familiarity is extinct for ever. Curse me if I can call him Mr. Sergeant—except, mark me, in *company*. Honour where honour is due; but should he ever visit us (do you think he ever will, Mary?) what a distinction should I keep up between him and our less fortunate friend, H. C. R.! Decent respect shall always be the Crabb's—but, somehow, short of reverence.

"Well, of my old friends, I have lived to see two knighted, one made a judge, another in a fair way to it. Why am I restive? why stands my sun upon Gibeah?

"Variously, my dear Mrs. Talfourd [I can be more familiar with her!], *Mrs. Sergeant Talfourd* — my sister prompts me—(these ladies stand upon ceremonies)—has the congratulable news affected the members of our small community. Mary comprehended it at once, and entered into it heartily. Mrs. W—— was, as usual, perverse; wouldn't, or couldn't understand it. A Sergeant? She thought Mr. T. was in the law. Didn't know that he ever 'listed.

"Emma alone truly sympathized. *She* had a silk gown come home that very day, and has precedence before her learned sisters accordingly.

"We are going to drink the health of Mr. and Mrs. Sergeant, with all the young sergeantry—and that is all that I can see that I shall get by the promotion.

"Valete, et mementote amici quondam vestri humillimi,

"C. L."

The following note to Mr. Moxon, on some long-forgotten occasion of momentary displeasure, the nature and object of which is uncertain, contains a fantastical exaggeration

* Mr. Lamb always insisted that the costume referred to was worn when he first gladdened his young friend by a call at Mr. Chitty's Chambers. I am afraid it is all apocryphal.

of anger, which, judged by those who knew the writer, will only illustrate the entire absence of all the bad passions of hatred and contempt it feigns.

TO MR. MOXON.

"1833.

"Dear M.,—Many thanks for the books; but most thanks for one immortal sentence: 'If I do not *cheat* him, never *trust* me again.' I do not know whether to admire most the wit or justness of the sentiment. It has my cordial approbation. My sense of *meum* and *tuum* applauds it. I maintain it, the eighth commandment hath a secret special reservation by which the reptile is exempt from any protection from it. As a dog, or a nigger, he is not a holder of property. Not a ninth of what he detains from the world is his own. Keep your hands from picking and stealing, is no ways referable to his acquists. I doubt whether bearing false witness against thy neighbour at all contemplated this possible scrub. Could Moses have seen the speck in vision? An *ex post facto* law alone could relieve him; and we are taught to expect no eleventh commandment. The outlaw to the Mosaic dispensation!—unworthy to have seen Moses behind!—to lay his desecrating hands upon Elia! Has the irreverent ark-toucher been struck blind, I wonder? The more I think of him, the less I think of him. His meanness is invisible with aid of solar microscope. My moral eye smarts at him. The less flea that bites little fleas! The great BEAST! The beggarly NIT!

"More when we meet; mind, you'll come, two of you; and couldn't you go off in the morning, that we may have a day-long curse at him, if curses are not dishallowed by descending so low? Amen. Maledicatur in extremis!

"C. L."

In the spring of 1833, Lamb made his last removal from Enfield to Edmonton. He was about to lose the society of Miss Isola, on the eve of marriage, and determined to live altogether with his sister, whether in her sanity or her madness. This change was announced in the following letter

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"End of May nearly.

"Dear Wordsworth,—Your letter, save in what respects your dear sister's health, cheered me in my new solitude. Mary is ill again. Her illnesses encroach yearly. The

last was three months, followed by two of depression most dreadful. I look back upon her earlier attacks with longing. Nice little durations of six weeks or so, followed by complete restoration—shocking as they were to me then. In short, half her life she is dead to me, and the other half is made anxious with fears and lookings forward to the next shock. With such prospects, it seemed to me necessary that she should no longer live with me, and be fluttered with continual removals; so I am come to live with her, at a Mr. Walden's, and his wife, who take in patients, and have arranged to lodge and board us only. They have had the care of her before. I see little of her, alas! I too often hear her. Sunt lachrymæ rerum! and you and I must bear it.

"To lay a little more load on it, a circumstance has happened, *cujus pars magna fui*, and which, at another crisis, I should have more rejoiced in. I am about to lose my old and only walk-companion, whose mirthful spirits were the 'youth of our house,' Emma Isola. I have her here now for a little while, but she is too nervous properly to be under such a roof, so she will make short visits—be no more an inmate. With my perfect approval, and more than concurrence, she is to be wedded to Moxon at the end of August—so 'perish the roses and the flowers'—how is it?"

"Now to the brighter side. I am emancipated from Enfield. I am with attentive people, and younger. I am three or four miles nearer the great city; coaches half-price less, and going always, of which I avail myself. I have few friends left there, one or two though, most beloved. But London streets and faces cheer me inexpressibly, though of the latter there should be not one known one remaining.

"Thank you for your cordial reception of 'Elia.' Inter nos, the 'Ariadne' is not a darling with me; several incongruous things are in it, but in the composition it served me as illustrative.

"I want you, in the 'Popular Fallacies,'* to like the 'Home that is no home,' and 'Rising with the Lark.'

"I am feeble, but cheerful in this my genial hot weather. Walked sixteen miles yesterday. I can't read much in summer time.

"With my kindest love to all, and prayers for dear Dorothy, I remain most affectionately yours, C. LAMB,

* A series of articles contributed, under this title, by Lamb, to the "New Monthly Magazine."

"At Mr. Walden's, Church-street, Edmonton, Middlesex.

"Moxon has introduced Emma to Rogers, and he smiles upon the project. I have given E. my MILTON (will you pardon me?*) in part of a *portion*. It hangs famously in his Murray-like shop."

On the approach of the wedding-day, fixed for the 30th of July, Lamb turned to the account of a half-tearful merriment the gift of a watch to the young lady whom he was about to lose.

TO MR. MOXON.

"July 24th, 1833.

"For God's sake give Emma no more watches; *one* has turned her head. She is arrogant and insulting. She said something very unpleasant to our old clock in the passage, as if he did not keep time, and yet he had made her no appointment. She takes it out every instant to look at the moment-hand. She lugs us out into the fields, because there the bird-boys ask you, 'Pray, sir, can you tell us what's o'clock?' and she answers them punctually. She loses all her time looking to see 'what the time is.' I overheard her whispering, 'Just so many hours, minutes, &c., to Tuesday; I think St. George's goes too slow.' This little present of Time!—why, 'tis Eternity to her!

"What can make her so fond of a ginger-bread watch?

"She has spoiled some of the movements. Between ourselves, she has kissed away 'half past twelve,' which I suppose to be the canonical hour in Hanover Square.

"Well, if 'love me, love my watch,' answers, she will keep time to you.

"It goes right by the Horse Guards.

"Dearest M.,—Never mind opposite† nonsense. She does not love you for the watch, but the watch for you. I will be at the wedding, and keep the 30th of July, as long as my poor months last me, as a festival, gloriously.

"Yours ever, ELIA.

"We have not heard from Cambridge. I will write the moment we do.

"Edmonton, 24th July, twenty minutes past three by Emma's watch."

* It had been proposed by Lamb that Mr. W. should be the possessor of the portrait if he outlived his friend, and that afterward it was to be bequeathed to Christ's College, Cambridge.

† Written on the opposite page to that in which the previous affectionate banter appears.

Miss Lamb was in the sad state of mental estrangement up to the day of the wedding, but then in the constant companionship of her brother at Edmonton. The following cluster of little letters to the new-married pair—the first from Charles, introducing one from Mary—shows the happy effect of the news on her mental health.

TO MR. AND MRS. MOXON.

"August, 1833.

"Dear Mr. and Mrs. Moxon,—Time very short. I wrote to Miss Fryer, and had the sweetest letter about you, Emma, that ever friendship dictated. 'I am full of good wishes, I am crying with good wishes,' she says; but you shall see it.

"Dear Moxon,—I take your writing most kindly, and shall most kindly your writing from Paris.

"I want to crowd another letter to Miss Fryer into the little time after dinner, before post-time. So with twenty thousand congratulations, Yours, C. L.

"I am calm, sober, happy. Turn over for the reason. I got home from Dover-street, by Evans, *half as sober as a judge*. I am turning over a new leaf, as I hope you will now."

The turn of the leaf presented the following from Miss Lamb:

"My dear Emma and Edward Moxon,—Accept my sincere congratulations, and imagine more good wishes than my weak nerves will let me put into good set words. The dreary blank of *unanswered questions* which I ventured to ask in vain, was cleared up on the wedding-day by Mrs. W.* taking a glass of wine, and, with a total change of countenance, begging leave to drink Mr. and Mrs. Moxon's health. It restored me from that moment, as if by an electrical stroke, to the entire possession of my senses. I never felt so calm and quiet after a similar illness as I do now. I feel as if all tears were wiped from my eyes, and all care from my heart. MARY LAMB."

At the foot of this letter is the following by Charles:

"Wednesday.

"Dears, again,—Your letter interrupted a seventh game at picquet which *we* were having, after walking to WRIGHT'S and purchasing shoes. We pass our time in cards, walks, and reading. We attack Tasso soon. C. L.

* The wife of the landlord of the house at Edmonton.

"Never was such a calm, or such a recovery. 'Tis her own words, undictated."

Lamb's latter days were brightened by the frequent—latterly periodical—hospitality of the admirable translator of Dante, at the British Museum. The following was addressed to this new friend lately acquired, but who became an old friend at once, while Mr. and Mrs. Moxon were on their wedding tour.

TO REV. H. F. CARY.

"Sept. 9th, 1833.

"Dear Sir,—Your packet I have only just received, owing, I suppose, to the absence of Moxon, who is flaunting it about *à la Parisienne*, with his new bride, our Emma, much to his satisfaction, and not a little to our dulness. We shall be quite well by the time you return from Worcestershire, and most, most (observe the repetition) glad to see you here, or anywhere.

"I will take my time with Darley's act. I wish poets would write a little plainer; he begins some of his words with a letter which is unknown to the English typography.

"Yours most truly, C. LAMB.

"P.S.—Pray let me know when you return. We are at Mr. Walden's, Church-street, Edmonton; no longer at Enfield. You will be amused to hear that my sister and I have, with the aid of Emma, scrambled through the 'Inferno,' by the blessed furtherance of your polar-star translation. I think we scarce left anything unmadeout. But our partner has left us, and we have not yet resumed. Mary's chief pride in it was that she should some day brag of it to you. Your 'Dante' and Sandys' 'Ovid' are the only helpmates of translations. Neither of you shirk a word.

"Fairfax's 'Tasso' is no translation at all. It's better in some places, but it merely observes the number of stanzas. As for images, similes, &c., he finds 'em himself, and never 'troubles Peter for the matter.'

"In haste, dear Cary, yours ever, C. LAMB.

"Has M. sent you 'Elia,' second volume? If not, he shall."

Miss Lamb did not escape all the cares of housekeeping by the new arrangement. The following little note shows the grotesque uses to which Lamb turned the smaller household anxieties:

TO MR. MOXON.

"1833.

"Dear M.,—Mary and I are very poorly. We have had a sick child, who, sleeping or not sleeping, next me, with a pasteboard partition between, killed my sleep. The little bastard is gone. My bedfellows are cough and cramp; we sleep three in a bed. Domestic arrangements (baker, butcher, and all) devolve on Mary. Don't come yet to this house of pest and age! We propose, when you and E. agree on the time, to come up and meet you at the B——'s, say a week hence, but do you make the appointment.

"Mind, our spirits are good, and we are happy in your happinesses. C. L.

"Our old and ever loves to dear Emma."

The following is Lamb's reply to a welcome communication of Sonnets, addressed by the bridegroom to the fair object of Lamb's regard, beautiful in themselves, and endeared to Lamb by honoured memories and generous hopes:

TO MR. MOXON.

"Nov. 29th, 1833.

"Mary is of opinion with me, that two of these Sonnets are of a higher grade than any poetry you have done yet. The one to Emma is so pretty! I have only allowed myself to transpose a word in the third line. Sacred shall it be from any intermeddling of mine. But we jointly beg that you will make four lines in the room of the four last. Read 'Darby and Joan,' in Mrs. Moxon's first album. There you'll see how beautiful in age the looking back to youthful years in an old couple is. But it is a violence to the feelings to anticipate that time in youth. I hope you and Emma will have many a quarrel and many a make-up (and she is beautiful in reconciliation!) before the dark days shall come in which ye shall say, 'there is small comfort in them.' You have begun a sort of character of Emma in them, very sweetly; carry it on, if you can, through the last lines.

"I love the sonnet to my heart, and you *shall* finish it, and I'll be hanged if I furnish a line toward it. So much for that. The next best is to the Ocean.

> 'Ye gallant winds, if e'er your LUSTY CHEEKS
> Blew longing lover to his mistress' side,
> O, puff your loudest, spread the canvass wide,'

is spirited. The last line I altered, and have re-altered it

as it stood. It is closer. These two are your best. But take a good deal of time in finishing the first. How proud should Emma be of her poets!

"Perhaps 'O Ocean' (though I like it) is too much of the open vowels, which Pope objects to. 'Great Ocean!' is obvious. To save sad thoughts I think is better (though not good) than for the mind to save herself. But 'tis a noble Sonnet. 'St. Cloud' I have no fault to find with.

"If I return the Sonnets, think it no disrespect, for I look for a printed copy. You have done better than ever. And now for a reason I did not notice 'em earlier. On Wednesday they came, and on Wednesday I was a-gadding. Mary gave me a holiday, and I set off to Snow Hill. From Snow Hill I deliberately was marching down, with noble Holborn before me, framing in mental cogitation a map of the dear London in prospect, thinking to traverse Wardour-street, &c., when, diabolically, I was interrupted by

Heigh-ho!
Little Barrow!—

Emma knows him—and prevailed on to spend the day at his sister's, where was an album, and (O, march of intellect!) plenty of literary conversation, and more acquaintance with the state of modern poetry than I could keep up with. I was positively distanced. Knowles's play, which, epilogued by me, lay on the PIANO, alone made me hold up my head. When I came home I read your letter, and glimpsed at your beautiful sonnet,

'Fair art thou as the morning, my young bride,'

and dwelt upon it in a confused brain, but determined not to open them all next day, being in a state not to be told of at Chatteris. Tell it not in Gath, Emma, lest the daughters triumph! I am at the end of my tether. I wish you could come on Tuesday with your fair bride. Why can't you? Do. We are thankful to your sister for being of the party. Come, and *bring* a sonnet on Mary's birth-day. Love to the whole Moxonry, and tell E. I every day love her more, and miss her less. Tell her so, from her loving uncle, as she has let me call myself. I bought a fine embossed card yesterday, and wrote for the Pawnbrokeress's album. She is a Miss Brown, engaged to a Mr. White. One of the lines was (I forgot the rest—but she had them at twenty-four hours' notice; she is going out to India with her husband):

"May your fame
And fortune, Frances, WHITEN with your name!"

Not bad as a pun. I *will* expect you before two on Tuesday. I am well and happy, tell E."

The following is Lamb's letter of acknowledgment to the author of the "Pleasures of Memory" for an early copy of his "Illustrated Poems," of a share in the publication of which Mr. Moxon was "justly vain." The artistical allusions are to Stothard; the allusions to the poet's own kindnesses need no explanation to those who have been enabled by circumstances, which now and then transpire, to guess at the generous course of his life.

TO MR. ROGERS.

"Dec., 1833.

"My dear Sir,—Your book, by the unremitting punctuality of your publisher, has reached me thus early. I have not opened it, nor will till to-morrow, when I promise myself a thorough reading of it. The 'Pleasures of Memory' was the first school-present I made to Mrs. Moxon; it has those nice woodcuts, and I believe she keeps it still. Believe me, that all the kindness you have shown to the husband of that excellent person seems done unto myself. I have tried my hand at a sonnet in the 'Times.' But the turn I gave it, though I hoped it would not displease you, I thought might not be equally agreeable to your artist. I met that dear old man at poor Henry's, with you, and again at Cary's, and it was sublime to see him sit, deaf, and enjoy all that was going on in mirth with the company. He reposed upon the many graceful, many fantastic images he had created; with them he dined, and took wine. I have ventured at an antagonist copy of verses, in the 'Athenæum,' to *him*, in which he is as everything, and you as nothing. He is no lawyer who cannot take two sides. But I am jealous of the combination of the sister arts. Let them sparkle apart. What injury (short of the theatres) did not Boydell's Shakspeare Gallery do me with Shakspeare? to have Opie's Shakspeare, Northcote's Shakspeare, light-headed Fuseli's Shakspeare, heavy-headed Romney's Shakspeare, wooden-headed West's Shakspeare (though he did the best in Lear), deaf-headed Reynolds's Shakspeare, instead of my, and everybody's Shakspeare; to be tied down to an authentic face of Juliet! to have Imogen's portrait! to confine the illimitable! I like you and Stothard (you best), but 'out upon this half-faced fellowship!' Sir, when I have read the book, I may trouble you, through Moxon,

with some faint criticisms. It is not the flatteringest compliment in a letter to an author to say you have not read his book yet. But the devil of a reader he must be who prances through it in five minutes; and no longer have I received the parcel. It was a little tantalizing to me to receive a letter from Landor, *Gebir* Landor, from Florence, to say he was just sitting down to read my 'Elia,' just received; but the letter was to go out before the reading. There are calamities in authorship which only authors know. I am going to call on Moxon on Monday, if the throng of carriages in Dover-street, on the morn of publication, do not barricade me out.

"With many thanks, and most respectful remembrances to your sister, Yours, C. LAMB.

"Have you seen Coleridge's happy exemplification in English of the Ovidian Elegiac metre?

> 'In the Hexameter rises the fountain's silvery current,
> In the Pentameter aye falling in melody down.'

"My sister is papering up the book—careful soul!"

Lamb and his sister were now, for the last year of their united lives, always together. What his feelings were in this companionship, when his beloved associate was deprived of reason, will be seen in the following most affecting letter to an old schoolfellow and very dear friend of Mrs. Moxon's—since dead—who took an earnest interest in their welfare.

TO MISS FRYER.

"Feb. 14th, 1834.

"Dear Miss Fryer,—Your letter found me just returned from keeping my birthday (pretty innocent!) at Dover-street. I see them pretty often. I have since had letters of business to write, or should have replied earlier. In one word, be less uneasy about me; I bear my privations very well; I am not in the depths of desolation, as heretofore. Your admonitions are not lost upon me. Your kindness has sunk into my heart. Have faith in me! It is no new thing for me to be left to my sister. When she is not violent, her rambling chat is better to me than the sense and sanity of this world. Her heart is obscured, not buried; it breaks out occasionally; and one can discern a strong mind struggling with the billows that have gone over it. I could be nowhere happier than under the same roof with her. Her memory is unnaturally strong; and from ages past, if we

may so call the earliest records of our poor life, she fetches thousands of names and things that never would have dawned upon me again, and thousands from the ten years she lived before me. What took place from early girlhood to her coming of age principally, lives again (every important thing, and every trifle) in her brain with the vividness of real presence. For twelve hours incessantly she will pour out, without intermission, all her past life, forgetting nothing, pouring out name after name to the Waldens, as a dream; sense and nonsense; truths and errors huddled together; a medley between inspiration and possession. What things we are! I know you will bear with me, talking of these things. It seems to ease me, for I have nobody to tell these things to now. Emma, I see, has got a harp! and is learning to play. She has framed her three Walton pictures, and pretty they look. That is a book you should read; such sweet religion in it, next to Woolman's! though the subject be baits, and hooks, and worms, and fishes. She has my copy at present, to do two more from.

"Very, very tired! I began this epistle, having been epistolizing all the morning, and very kindly would I end it, could I find adequate expressions to your kindness. We did set our minds on seeing you in spring. One of us will indubitably. But I am not skilled in almanac learning, to know when spring precisely begins and ends. Pardon my blots; I am glad you like your book. I wish it had been half as worthy of your acceptance as John Woolman. But 'tis a good-natured book."

A few days afterward Lamb's passionate desire to serve a most deserving friend broke out in the following earnest little letter:

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Church-street, Edmonton, Feb. 22d, 1834.

"Dear Wordsworth,—I write from a house of mourning. The oldest and best friends I have left are in trouble. A branch of them (and they of the best stock of God's creatures, I believe) is establishing a school at Carlisle; her name is L—— M——; her address, 75 Castle-street, Carlisle; her qualities (and her motives for this exertion) are the most amiable, most upright. For thirty years she has been tried by me, and on her behaviour I would stake my soul. O, if you can recommend her, how would I love you—if I could love you better! Pray, pray recommend her. She

is as good a human creature—next to my sister, perhaps, the most exemplary female I ever knew. Moxon tells me you would like a letter from me; you shall have one. *This* I cannot mingle up with any nonsense which you usually tolerate from C. Lamb. Need he add loves to wife, sister, and all? Poor Mary is ill again, after a short lucid interval of four or five months. In short, I may call her half dead to me. How good you are to me. Yours with fervour of friendship, for ever, C. L.

"If you want references, the Bishop of Carlisle may be one. L——'s sister (as good as she, she cannot be better though she tries) educated the daughters of the late Earl of Carnarvon, and he settled a handsome annuity on her for life. In short, all the family are a sound rock."

A quiet dinner at the British Museum with Mr. Cary once a month, to which Lamb looked forward with almost boyish eagerness, was now almost his only festival. In a little note to his host about this time, he hints at one of his few physical tastes. "We are thinking," he says, "of roast *shoulder* of mutton with onion sauce, but I scorn to prescribe to the hospitalities of mine host." The following, after these festivities had been interrupted by Mr. Cary's visit to the Continent, is their last memorial:

TO MR. CARY.

"Sept. 12th, 1834.

"By Cot's plessing, we will not be absence at the grace.

"Dear C.,—We long to see you, and hear account of your peregrinations, of the Tun at Heidelburg, the Clock at Strasburg, the statue at Rotterdam, the dainty Rhenish, and poignant Moselle wines, Westphalian hams, and Botargoes of Altona. But perhaps you have seen, not tasted any of these things.

"Yours, very glad to chain you back again to your proper centre, books and Bibliothecæ, C. and M. Lamb.

"I have only got your note just now *per negligentiam periniqui Moxoni*."

The following little note has a mournful interest, as Lamb's last scrap of writing. It is dated on the very day on which erysipelas followed the accident, apparently trifling, which, five days after, terminated in his death. It is addressed to the wife of his oldest surviving friend:

TO MRS. DYER.

"Dec. 22d, 1834.

"Dear Mrs. Dyer,—I am very uneasy about a *Book* which I either have lost or left at your house on Thursday. It was the book I went out to fetch from Miss Buffam's, while the tripe was frying. It is called 'Phillips's Theatrum Poetarum,' but it is an English book. I think I left it in the parlour. It is Mr. Cary's book, and I would not lose it for the world. Pray, if you find it, book it at the Swan, Snow Hill, by an Edmonton stage immediately, directed to Mr. Lamb, Church-street, Edmonton, or write to say you cannot find it. I am quite anxious about it. If it is lost, I shall never like tripe again.

"With kindest love to Mr. Dyer and all,

"Yours truly, C. LAMB."

CHAPTER THE LAST.

Lamb's Wednesday nights compared with the Evenings of Holland House.—His dead companions, Dyer, Godwin, Thelwall, Hazlitt, Barnes, Haydon, Coleridge, and others.—Last Glimpses of Charles and Mary Lamb.

"Gone; all are gone, the old familiar faces!"

Two circles of rare social enjoyment, differing as widely as possible in all external circumstances, but each superior in its kind to all others, during the same period frankly opened to men of letters, now existing only in the memories of those who are fast departing from us, may, without offence, be placed side by side in grateful recollection; they are the dinners at Holland House and the suppers of "the Lambs" at the Temple, Great Russell-street, and Islington. Strange, at first, as this juxtaposition may seem, a little reflection will convince the few survivors who have enjoyed both that it involves no injustice to either; while, with those who are too young to have been admitted to these rare festivities, we may exercise the privilege of age by boasting what good fellowship was once enjoyed, and what "good talk" there was once in the world!

But let us call to mind the aspects of each scene before we attempt to tell of the conversation, which will be hard-

er to recall and impossible to characterize. And, first, let us invite the reader to assist at a dinner at Holland House, in the height of the London and Parliamentary season, say a Saturday in June. It is scarcely seven—for the luxuries of the house are enhanced by a punctuality in the main object of the day, which yields to no dilatory guest of whatever pretension—and you are seated in an oblong room, rich in old gilding, opposite a deep recess, pierced by large old windows, through which the rich branches of trees, bathed in golden light, just admit the faint outline of the Surrey Hills. Among the guests are some perhaps of the highest rank, always some of high political importance, about whom the interest of busy life gathers, intermixed with others eminent already in literature or art, or of that dawning promise which the hostess delights to discover and the host to smile on. All are assembled for the purpose of enjoyment; the anxieties of the minister, the feverish struggles of the partisan, the silent toils of the artist or critic, are finished for the week; professional and literary jealousies are hushed; sickness, decrepitude, and death are silently voted shadows; and the brilliant assemblage is prepared to exercise to the highest degree the extraordinary privilege of mortals to live in the knowledge of mortality without its consciousness, and to people the present hour with delights, as if a man lived, and laughed, and enjoyed in this world for ever. Every appliance of physical luxury which the most delicate art can supply, attends on each; every faint wish which luxury creates is anticipated; the noblest and most gracious countenance in the world smiles over the happiness it is diffusing, and redoubles it by cordial invitations and encouraging words, which set the humblest stranger guest at perfect ease. As the dinner merges into the dessert, and the sunset casts a richer glow on the branches, still, or lightly waving in the evening light, and on the scene within, the harmony of all sensations becomes more perfect; a delighted and delighting chuckle invites attention to some joyous sally of the richest intellectual wit reflected in the faces of all, even to the favourite page in green, who attends his mistress with duty like that of the antique world; the choicest wines are enhanced in their liberal but temperate use by the vista opened in Lord Holland's tales of bacchanalian evenings at Brookes's, with Fox and Sheridan, when potations deeper and more serious rewarded the statesman's toils and shortened his days; until at length the serener pleasure of conversation, of the

now carelessly scattered groups, is enjoyed in that old, long, unrivalled library in which Addison mused, and wrote, and drank; where every living grace attends; "and more than echoes talk along the walls." One happy peculiarity of these assemblies was the number of persons, in different stations and of various celebrity, who were gratified by seeing, still more in hearing and knowing each other; the statesman was relieved from care by association with the poet of whom he had heard and partially read; and the poet was elevated by the courtesy which "bared the *great* heart" which "beats beneath a star;" and each felt, not rarely, the true dignity of the other, modestly expanding under the most genial auspices.

Now turn to No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, at ten o'clock, when the sedater part of the company are assembled, and the happier stragglers are dropping in from the play. Let it be any autumn or winter month, when the fire is blazing steadily, and the clean-swept hearth and whist-tables speak of the spirit of Mrs. Battle, and serious looks require "the rigour of the game." The furniture is old-fashioned and worn; the ceiling low, and not wholly unstained by traces of "the great plant," though now virtuously forborne; but the Hogarths, in narrow black frames, abounding in infinite thought, humour, and pathos, enrich the walls, and all things wear an air of comfort and hearty English welcome. Lamb himself, yet unrelaxed by the glass, is sitting with a sort of Quaker primness at the whist-table, the gentleness of his melancholy smile half lost in his intentness on the game; his partner, the author of "Political Justice" (the majestic expression of his large head not disturbed by disproportion of his comparatively diminutive stature), is regarding his hand with a philosophic but not a careless eye; Captain Burney, only not venerable because so young in spirit, sits between them; and H. C. R., who alone now and then breaks the proper silence, to welcome some incoming guest, is his happy partner—true winner in the game of life, whose leisure, achieved early, is devoted to his friends! At another table, just beyond the circle which extends from the fire, sit another four. The broad, burly, jovial bulk of John Lamb, the Ajax Telamon of the slender clerks of the old South Sea House, whom he sometimes introduces to the rooms of his younger brother, surprised to learn from them that he is growing famous, confronts the stately but courteous Alsager; while P., "his few hairs *bristling*" at gentle objurgation, watches his partner M. B.,

dealing, with "soul more white"* than the hands of which Lamb once said, "M., if dirt was trumps, what hands you would hold!" In one corner of the room you may see the pale, earnest countenance of Charles Lloyd, who is discoursing "of fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute," with Leigh Hunt; and, if you choose to listen, you will scarcely know which most to admire—the severe logic of the melancholy reasoner, or its graceful evasion by the tricksome fantasy of the joyous poet. Basil Montague, gentle enthusiast in the cause of humanity, which he has lived to see triumphant, is pouring into the outstretched ear of George Dyer some tale of legalized injustice, which the recipient is vainly endeavouring to comprehend. Soon the room fills; in *slouches* Hazlitt from the theatre, where his stubborn anger for Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo has been softened by Miss Stephens's angelic notes, which might "chase anger, and grief, and fear, and sorrow, and pain from mortal or immortal minds;" Kenney, with a tremulous pleasure, announces that there is a crowded house to the ninth representation of his new comedy, of which Lamb lays down his cards to inquire; or Ayrton, mildly radiant, whispers the continual triumph of "Don Giovanni," for which Lamb, incapable of Opera, is happy to take his word. Now and then an actor glances on us from "the rich Cathay" of the world behind the scenes, with news of its brighter humankind, and with looks reflecting the public favour—Liston, grave beneath the weight of the town's regards—or Miss Kelly, unexhausted in spirit by alternating the drolleries of high farce with the terrible pathos of melodrama—or Charles Kemble mirrors the chivalry of thought, and ennobles the party by bending on them looks beaming with the aristocracy of nature. Meanwhile Becky lays the cloth on the side-table, under the direction of the most quiet, sensible, and kind of women, who soon compels the younger and more hungry of the guests to partake largely of the cold roast lamb or boiled beef, the heaps of smoking roasted potatoes, and the vast jug of porter, often replenished from the foaming pots, which the best tap of Fleet-street supplies. Perfect freedom prevails, save when the hospitable pressure of the mistress excuses excess; and perhaps the physical enjoyment of the play-goer exhausted with pleas-

* Lamb's Sonnet, dedicatory of his first volume of prose to this cherished friend, thus concludes:

"Free from self-seeking, envy, low design,
I have not found a whiter soul than thine."

ure, or of the author jaded with the labour of the brain, is not less than that of the guests at the most charming of aristocratic banquets. As the hot water and its accompaniments appear, and the severities of whist relax, the light of conversation thickens: Hazlitt, catching the influence of the spirit from which he has lately begun to abstain, utters some fine criticism with struggling emphasis; Lamb stammers out puns suggestive of wisdom, for happy Barron Field to admire and echo; the various driblets of talk combine into a stream, while Miss Lamb moves gently about to see that each modest stranger is duly served; turning, now and then, an anxious loving eye on Charles, which is softened into a half-humorous expression of resignation to inevitable fate as he mixes his second tumbler! This is on ordinary nights, when the accustomed Wednesday-men assemble; but there is a difference on great extra nights, gladdened by "the bright visitations" of Wordsworth or Coleridge: the cordiality of the welcome is the same, but a sedater wisdom prevails. Happy hours were they for the young disciple of the then desperate, now triumphant cause of Wordsworth's genius, to be admitted to the presence of the poet who had opened a new world for him in the undiscovered riches of his own nature, and its affinities with the outer universe; whom he worshipped the more devoutly for the world's scorn; for whom he felt the future in the instant, and anticipated the "All hail hereafter!" which the great poet has lived to enjoy! To win him to speak of his own poetry—to hear him recite its noblest passages—and to join in his brave defiance of the fashion of the age, was the solemn pleasure of such a season, and, of course, superseded all minor disquisitions. So, when Coleridge came, argument, wit, humour, criticism were hushed; the pertest, smartest, and the cleverest felt that all were assembled to listen; and if a card-table had been filled, or a dispute begun before he was excited to continuous speech, his gentle voice, undulating in music, soon

> "Suspended *whist*, and took with ravishment
> The thronging audience."

The conversation which animated each of these memorable circles approximated in essence much more nearly than might be surmised from the difference in station of the principal talkers and the contrast in physical appliances; that of the bowered saloon of Holland House having more of earnestness and depth, and that of the Temple-attic more of airy grace than would be predicated by a superficial ob-

server. The former possessed the peculiar interest of directly bordering on the scene of political conflict—gathering together the most eloquent leaders of the Whig party, whose repose from energetic action spoke of the week's conflict, and in whom the moment's enjoyment derived a peculiar charm from the perilous glories of the struggle which the morrow was to renew—when power was just within reach, or held with a convulsive grasp, like the eager and solemn pleasure of the soldier's banquet in the pause of victory. The pervading spirit of Lamb's parties was also that of social progress; but it was the spirit of the dreamers and thinkers, not of the combatants of the world—men who, it may be, drew their theories from a deeper range of meditation, and embraced the future with more comprehensive hope, but about whom the immediate interest of party did not gather; whose victories were all within; whose rewards were visions of blessings for their species in the farthest horizon of benevolent prophecy. If a profounder thought was sometimes dragged to light in the dim circle of Lamb's companions than was native to the brighter sphere, it was still a rare felicity to watch there the union of elegance with purpose in some leader of party —the delicate, almost fragile grace of illustration in some one, perhaps destined to lead advancing multitudes or to withstand their rashness; to observe the growth of strength in the midst of beauty expanding from the sense of the heroic past, as the famed Basil tree of Boccacio grew from the immolated relic beneath it. If the alternations in the former oscillated between wider extremes, touching on the wildest farce and most earnest tragedy of life, the rich space of brilliant comedy which lived ever between them in the latter was diversified by serious interests and heroic allusions. Sydney Smith's wit—not so wild, so grotesque, so deep-searching as Lamb's—had even more quickness of intellectual demonstration; wedded moral and political wisdom to happiest language with a more rapid perception of secret affinities; was capable of producing epigrammatic splendour reflected more permanently in the mind than the fantastic brilliancy of those rich conceits which Lamb stammered out with his painful smile. Mackintosh might vie with Coleridge in vast and various knowledge; but there the competition between these great talkers ends, and the contrast begins; the contrast between facility and inspiration; between the ready access to each ticketed and labelled compartment of history, science, art, criticism, and

the genius that fused and renovated all. But then a younger spirit appeared at Lord Holland's table to redress the balance—not so poetical as Coleridge, but more lucid—in whose vast and joyous memory all the mighty past lived and glowed anew; whose declamations presented, not groups tinged with distant light, like those of Coleridge, but a series of historical figures in relief, exhibited in bright succession, as if by dioramic art there glided before us embossed surfaces of heroic life.* Rogers, too, was there—

* I take leave to copy the glowing picture of the evenings of Holland House and of its admirable master, drawn by this favourite guest himself, from an article which adorned the "Edinburgh Review" just after Lord Holland's death.

"The time is coming when, perhaps a few old men, the last survivors of our generation, will in vain seek, amid new streets, and squares, and railway stations, for the site of that dwelling which was in their youth the favourite resort of wits and beauties—of painters and poets—of scholars, philosophers, and statesmen. They will then remember, with strange tenderness, many objects once familiar to them—the avenue and the terrace, the busts and the paintings; the carving, the grotesque gilding, and the enigmatical mottoes. With peculiar fondness they will recal that venerable chamber, in which all the antique gravity of a college library was so singularly blended with all that female grace and wit could devise to embellish a drawing-room. They will recollect, not unmoved, those shelves loaded with the varied learning of many lands and many ages; those portraits in which were preserved the features of the best and wisest Englishmen of two generations. They will recollect how many men who have guided the politics of Europe—who have moved great assemblies by reason and eloquence—who have put life into bronze and canvass, or who have left to posterity things so written as it shall not willingly let them die—were there mixed with all that was loveliest and gayest in the society of the most splendid of capitals. They will remember the singular character which belonged to that circle, in which every talent and accomplishment, every art and science, had its place. They will remember how the last debate was discussed in one corner, and the last comedy of Scribe in another; while Wilkie gazed with modest admiration on Reynolds's Baretti; while Mackintosh turned over Thomas Aquinas to verify a quotation; while Talleyrand related his conversations with Barras at the Luxemburg, or his ride with Lannes over the field of Austerlitz. They will remember, above all, the grace —and the kindness, far more admirable than grace—with which the princely hospitality of that ancient mansion was dispensed. They will remember the venerable and benignant countenance, and the cordial voice of him who bade them welcome. They will remember that temper which years of pain, of sickness, of lameness, of confinement, seemed only to make sweeter and sweeter; and that frank politeness, which at once relieved all the embarrassment of the youngest and most timid writer or artist, who found himself for the first time among ambassadors and earls. They will remember that constant flow of conversation, so natural, so animated, so various, so rich with observation and anecdote; that wit that never gave a wound; that exquisite mimicry which ennobled instead of degrading; that goodness of heart which appeared in every look and accent, and gave additional value to every talent and acquirement. They will remember, too, that he whose name they hold in reverence was not less distinguished by the inflexible uprightness of his political conduct, than by his loving disposition and his winning manners. They will remember that, in the last lines which he traced, he expressed his joy that he had done nothing unworthy of the friend of Fox and Grey; and they will have reason to feel similar joy, if, in looking back *on many* troubled years, they cannot accuse themselves of having done any-

connecting the literature of the last age with this, partaking of some of the best characteristics of both—whose first poem sparkled in the closing darkness of the last century "like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear," and who was advancing from a youth which had anticipated memory to an age of kindness and hope; and Moore, who paused in the fluttering expression of graceful trifles to whisper some deep-toned thought of Ireland's wrongs and sorrows.

Literature and Art supplied the favourite topics to each of these assemblies—both discussed with earnest admiration, but surveyed in different aspects. The conversation at Lord Holland's was wont to mirror the happiest aspects of the living mind; to celebrate the latest discoveries in science; to echo the quarterly decisions of imperial criticism; to reflect the modest glow of young reputations: all was gay, graceful, decisive, as if the pen of Jeffrey could have spoken; or, if it reverted to old times, it rejoiced in those classical associations which are always young. At Lamb's, on the other hand, the topics were chiefly sought among the obscure and remote; the odd, the quaint, the fantastic were drawn out from their dusty recesses; nothing could be more foreign to its embrace than the modern circulating library, even when it teemed with the Scotch novels. Whatever the subject was, however, in the more aristocratic or the humbler sphere, it was always discussed by those best entitled to talk on it; no others had a chance of being heard. This remarkable freedom from *bores* was produced in Lamb's circle by the authoritative texture of its commanding minds; in Lord Holland's, by the more direct and more genial influence of the hostess, which checked that tenacity of subject and opinion which sometimes broke the charm of Lamb's parties by "a duel in the form of a debate." Perhaps beyond any other hostess—certainly far beyond any host, Lady Holland possessed the tact of perceiving, and the power of evoking the various capacities which lurked in every part of the brilliant circles over which she presided, and restrained each to its appropriate sphere and portion of the evening. To enkindle the enthusiasm of an artist on the theme over which he had achieved the most facile mastery; to set loose the heart of the rustic poet, and imbue his speech with the freedom of his native hills; to draw from the adventurous traveller a breathing picture of his most imminent danger, or to em-

thing unworthy of men who were distinguished by the friendship of Lord Holland."

bolden the bashful soldier to disclose his own share in the perils and glories of some famous battle-field; to encourage the generous praise of friendship when the speaker and the subject reflected interest on each other, or win from an awkward man of science the secret history of a discovery which had astonished the world; to conduct these brilliant developments to the height of satisfaction, and then to shift the scene by the magic of a word, were among her nightly successes. And if this extraordinary power over the elements of social enjoyment was sometimes wielded without the entire concealment of its despotism; if a decisive check sometimes rebuked a speaker who might intercept the variegated beauty of Jeffrey's indulgent criticism, or the jest announced and self-rewarded in Sydney Smith's cordial and triumphant laugh, the authority was too clearly exerted for the evening's prosperity, and too manifestly impelled by an urgent consciousness of the value of these golden hours which were fleeting within its confines, to sadden the enforced silence with more than a momentary regret. If ever her prohibition—clear, abrupt, and decisive—indicated more than a preferable regard for livelier discourse, it was when a depreciatory tone was adopted toward genius, or goodness, or honest endeavour, or when some friend, personal or intellectual, was mentioned in slighting phrase. Habituated to a generous partisanship by strong sympathy with a great political cause, she carried the fidelity of her devotion to that cause into her social relations, and was ever the truest and the fastest of friends. The tendency, often more idle than malicious, to soften down the intellectual claims of the absent, which so insidiously besets literary conversation, and teaches a superficial insincerity even to substantial esteem and regard, and which was sometimes insinuated into the conversation of Lamb's friends, though never into his own, found no favour in her presence; and hence the conversations over which she presided, perhaps beyond all that ever flashed with a kindred splendour, were marked by that integrity of good nature which might admit of their exact repetition to every living individual whose merits were discussed, without the danger of inflicting pain. Under her auspices, not only all critical, but all personal talk was tinged with kindness; the strong interest which she took in the happiness of her friends shed a peculiar sunniness over the aspects of life presented by the common topics of alliances, and *marriages*, and promotions; and there was not a hopeful

engagement, or a happy wedding, or a promotion of a friend's son, or a new intellectual triumph of any youth with whose name and history she was familiar, but became an event on which she expected and required congratulation as on a part of her own fortune. Although there was necessarily a preponderance in her society of the sentiment of popular progress, which once was cherished almost exclusively by the party to whom Lord Holland was united by sacred ties, no expression of triumph in success, no virulence in sudden disappointment, was ever permitted to wound the most sensitive ears of her conservative guests. It might be that some placid comparison of recent with former times spoke a sense of freedom's peaceful victory; or that, on the giddy edge of some great party struggle, the festivities of the evening might take a more serious cast as news arrived from the scene of contest, and the pleasure might be deepened by the peril; but the feeling was always restrained by the supremacy given to those permanent solaces for the mind, in the beautiful and the great, which no political changes disturb. Although the death of the noble master of the venerated mansion closed its portals for ever on the exquisite enjoyments to which they had been so generously expanded, the art of conversation lived a little longer in the smaller circle which Lady Holland still drew almost daily around her; honouring his memory by following his example, and struggling against the perpetual sense of unutterable bereavement, by rendering to literature that honour and those reliefs which English aristocracy has too often denied it, and seeking consolation in making others proud and happy. That lingering happiness is extinct now; Lamb's kindred circle—kindred, though so different—dispersed almost before he died; the "thoughts that wandered through eternity" are no longer expressed in time; the fancies and conceits, "gay creatures of the element" of social delight, "that in the colours of the rainbow lived, and played in the plighted clouds," flicker only in the backward perspective of waning years; and for the survivors I may venture to affirm, no such conversation as they have shared in either circle will ever be theirs again in this world!

Before closing these last Memorials of Charles and Mary Lamb, it may be permitted me to glance separately at some of the friends who are grouped around them in memory, and who, like them, live only in recollection, and in the works they have left behind them.

GEORGE DYER was one of the first objects of Lamb's youthful reverence, for he had attained the stately rank of Grecian in the venerable school of Christ's Hospital when Charles entered it, a little, timid, affectionate child; but this boyish respect, once amounting to awe, gave place to a familiar habit of loving banter, which, springing from the depths of old regard, approximated to school-boy roguery, and, now and then, though very rarely, gleamed on the consciousness of the ripe scholar. No contrast could be more vivid than that presented by the relations of each to the literature they both loved: one divining its inmost essences, plucking out the heart of its mysteries, shedding light on its dimmest recesses; the other devoted, with equal assiduity, to its externals. Books, to Dyer, "were a real world, both pure and good;" among them he passed, unconscious of time, from youth to extreme age, vegetating on their dates, and forms, and "trivial fond records," in the learned air of great libraries, or the dusty confusion of his own, with the least possible apprehension of any human interest vital in their pages, or of any spirit of wit or fancy gleaming across them. His life was an academic pastoral. Methinks I see his gaunt, awkward form, set off by trowsers too short, like those outgrown by a gawky lad, and a rusty coat as much too large for the wearer, hanging about him like those garments which the aristocratic Milesian peasantry prefer to the most comfortable rustic dress; his long head silvered over with short yet straggling hair, and his dark gray eyes glistening with faith and wonder as Lamb satisfies the curiosity which has gently disturbed his studies as to the authorship of the Waverley Novels, by telling him, in the strictest confidence, that they are the works of Lord Castlereagh, just returned from the congress of sovereigns at Vienna! Off he runs, with animated stride and shambling enthusiasm, nor stops till he reaches Maida Hill, and breathes his news into the startled ear of Leigh Hunt, who, "as a public writer," ought to be possessed of the great fact with which George is laden! Or shall I endeavour to revive the bewildered look with which, just after he had been announced as one of Lord Stanhope's executors and residuary legatees, he received Lamb's grave inquiry, "Whether it was true, as commonly reported, that he was to be made a lord?" "O dear no! Mr. Lamb," responded he, with serious earnestness, but not without a moment's quivering vanity, "I could not think of such a thing; it is not true, I assure you." "I thought not," said Lamb,

"and I contradict it wherever I go. But the government will not ask your consent; they may raise you to the peerage without your even knowing it." "I hope not, Mr. Lamb; indeed, indeed, I hope not; it would not suit me at all," responded Dyer, and went his way, musing on the possibility of a strange honour descending on his reluctant brow. Or shall I recall the visible presentment of his bland unconsciousness of evil when his sportive friend taxed it to the utmost by suddenly asking what he thought of the murderer Williams, who, after destroying two families in Ratcliffe Highway, had broken prison by suicide, and whose body had just before been conveyed, in shocking procession, to its cross-road grave! The desperate attempt to compel the gentle optimist to speak ill of a mortal creature produced no happier success than the answer, "Why, I should think, Mr. Lamb, he must have been rather an eccentric character." This simplicity of a nature not only unspotted by the world, but almost abstracted from it, will seem the more remarkable, when it is known that it was subjected, at the entrance of life, to a hard battle with fortune. Dyer was the son of very poor parents, residing in an eastern suburb of London, Stepney or Bethnal-green-ward, where he attracted the attention of two elderly ladies as a serious child, with an extraordinary love for books. They obtained for him a presentation to Christ's Hospital, which he entered at seven years of age; fought his way through its sturdy ranks to its head; and, at nineteen, quitted it for Cambridge, with only an exhibition and his scholarly accomplishments to help him. On he went, however, placid if not rejoicing, through the difficulties of a life illustrated only by scholarship; encountering tremendous labours; unresting yet serene; until at eighty-five he breathed out the most blameless of lives, which began in a struggle to end in a learned dream!

Mr. Godwin, who, during the happiest period of Lamb's weekly parties, was a constant assistant at his whist-table, resembled Dyer in simplicity of manner and devotion to letters; but the simplicity was more superficial, and the devotion more profound than the kindred qualities in the guileless scholar, and, instead of forming the entire being, only marked the surface of a nature beneath which extraordinary power lay hidden. As the absence of wordly wisdom subjected Dyer to the sportive sallies of Lamb, so a like deficiency in Godwin exposed him to the coarser mirth of Mr. Horne Tooke, who was sometimes inclined to seek

relaxation for the iron muscles of his imperturbable mind in trying to make a philosopher look foolish. To a stranger's gaze, the author of the "Political Justice" and "Caleb Williams," as he appeared in the Temple, always an object of curiosity except to his familiars, presented none of those characteristics with which fancy had invested the daring speculator and relentless novelist; nor, when he broke silence, did his language tend to reconcile the reality with the expectation. The disproportion of a frame which, low of stature, was surmounted by a massive head which might befit a presentable giant, was rendered almost imperceptible, not by any vivacity of expression (for his countenance was rarely lighted up by the deep-seated genius within), but by a gracious suavity of manner which many "a fine old English gentleman" might envy. His voice was small, the topics of his ordinary conversation trivial, and discussed with a delicacy and precision which might almost be mistaken for finical; and the presence of the most interesting persons in literary society, of which he had enjoyed the best, would not prevent him from falling after dinner into the most profound sleep. This gentle, drowsy, spiritless demeanour presents a striking contrast to a reputation which once filled Europe with its echoes; but it was, in truth, when rightly understood, perfectly consistent with those intellectual elements which in some raised the most enthusiastic admiration, and from others elicited the wildest denunciations of visionary terror.

In Mr. Godwin's mind, the faculty of abstract reason so predominated over all others as practically to extinguish them; and his taste, akin to this faculty, sought only for its development through the medium of composition for the press. He had no imagination, no fancy, no wit, no humour; or, if he possessed any of those faculties, they were obscured by that of pure reason; and being wholly devoid of the quick sensibility which irritates speech into eloquence, and of the passion for immediate excitement and applause which tends to its presentment before admiring assemblies, he desired no other audience than that which he could silently address, and learned to regard all things through a contemplative medium. In this sense, far more than in the extravagant application of his wildest theories, he levelled all around him; admitted no greatness but that of literature, and neither desired nor revered any triumphs but those of thought. If such a reasoning faculty, guided by such a disposition, had been applied to

abstract sciences, no effect remarkable beyond that of rare excellence would have been produced; but the apparent anomalies of Mr. Godwin's intellectual history arose from the application of his power to the passions, the interests, and the hopes of mankind, at a time when they enkindled into frightful action, and when he calmly worked out his problems among their burning elements with the "icebrook's temper" and the severest logic. And if some extreme conclusions were inconsistent with the faith and the duty which alone can sustain and regulate our nature, there was no small compensation in the severity of the process to which the student was impelled, for the slender peril which might remain lest the results should be practically adopted. A system founded on pure reason, which rejected the impulses of natural affection, the delights of gratitude, the influences of prejudice, the bondage of custom, the animation of personal hope; which appealed to no passion, which suggested no luxury, which excited no animosities, and which offered no prize for the observance of its laws, except a participation in the expanding glories of progressive humanity, was little calculated to allure from the accustomed paths of ancient ordinance any man disposed to walk in them by the lights from heaven. On the other hand, it was a healthful diversion from those seductions in which the heart secretly enervates and infects the understanding, to invite the revolutionary spectator to the contemplation of the distant and the refined; by the pursuit of impracticable error to brace the mind for the achievement of everlasting truth; and on the "heat and flame of the distemper" of an impassioned democracy to "sprinkle cool patience." The idol Political Justice, of which he was the slow and laborious architect, if it for a while enchanted, did not long enthral or ever debase its worshippers; "its bones were marrowless, its blood was cold," but there was surely "speculation in its eyes" which "glared withal" into the future. Such high casuistry as it evoked has always an ennobling tendency, even when it dallies with error; the direction of thought in youth is of less consequence than the mode of its exercise; and it is only when the base interests and sensual passions of mortality pander to the understanding that truth may fear for the issue.

The author of this cold and passionless intellectual phantasy looked out upon the world he hoped to inform from recesses of contemplation which the outward incidents of

life did not disturb, and which, when closed, left him a common man, appearing to superficial observers rather below than above the level of ordinary talkers. To his inward gaze the stupendous changes which agitated Europe, at the time he wrote, were silent as a picture. The pleasure of his life was to think; its business was to write; all else in it was vanity. Regarding his own being through the same spiritualizing medium, he saw no reason why the springs of its existence should wear out, and, in the spring-time of his speculation, held that man might become immortal on earth by the effort of the will. His style partook of the quality of his intellect and the character of its purposes—it was pure, simple, colourless. His most imaginative passages are inspired only by a logic quickened into enthusiasm by the anticipation of the approaching discovery of truth—the dawning *Eureka* of the reasoner; they are usually composed of "line upon line and precept upon precept," without an involution of style, or an eddy in the thought. He sometimes complained, though with the benignity that always marked his estimate of his opponents, that Mr. Malthus's style was too richly ornamented for argument; and certainly, with all its vivacity of illustration, it lacks the transparent simplicity of his own. The most palpable result which he ever produced by his writings was the dark theory in the first edition of the work on Population, which was presented as an answer to his reasoning on behalf of the perfectibility of man; and he used to smile at his ultimate triumph, when the writer, who had only intended a striking paradox, tamed it down to the wisdom of economy, and adapted it to Poor-law uses; neutralized his giant spectres of Vice and Misery by the practical intervention of Moral Restraint; and left the optimist Godwin still in unclouded possession of the hope of universal peace and happiness, postponed only to that time when passion shall be subjected to reason, and population, no more rising like a resistless tide between adamantine barriers to submerge the renovated earth, shall obey the commands of wisdom; rise and fall as the means of subsistence expand or contract, and only contribute an impulse to the universal harmony.

The persons of Mr. Godwin's romances—stranger still—are the naked creations of the same intellectual power, marvellously endowed with galvanic life. Though with happier symmetry, they are as much made out of chains and links of reasoning as the monster was fashioned by the

chemistry of the student in the celebrated novel of his gifted daughter. Falkland and Caleb Williams are the mere impersonations of the unbounded love of reputation and irresistible curiosity; these ideas are developed in each with masterly iteration—to the two ideas all causes give way; and materials are subjected, often of remarkable coarseness, to the refinement of the conception. Hazlitt used to observe of these two characters, that the manner they are played into each other was equal to anything of the kind in the drama; and there is no doubt that the opposition, though at the cost of probability, is most powerfully maintained; but the effect is partly owing to the absence of all extrinsic interest which could interfere with the main purpose; the beatings of the heart become audible, not only from their own intensity, but from the desolation which the author has expanded around them. The consistency in each is that of an idea, not of a character; and if the effect of form and colour is produced, it is, as in line engraving, by the infinite minuteness and delicacy of the single strokes. In like manner, the incidents by which the author seeks to exemplify the wrongs inflicted by power on goodness in civilized society are utterly fantastical; nothing can be more minute, nothing more unreal; the youth being involved by a web of circumstances woven to immesh him, which the condition of society that the author intends to repudiate renders impossible; and which, if true, would prove, not that the framework of law is tyrannous, but that the will of a single oppressor may elude it. The subject of "St. Leon" is more congenial to the author's power; but it is, in like manner, a logical development of the consequences of a being prolonged on earth through ages; and, as the dismal vista expands, the skeleton speculators crowd in to mock and sadden us!

Mr. Godwin was thus a man of two beings, which held little discourse with each other—the daring inventor of theories constructed of air-drawn diagrams, and the simple gentleman, who suffered nothing to disturb or excite him beyond his study. He loved to walk in the crowded streets of London, not, like Lamb, enjoying the infinite varieties of many-coloured life around him, but because he felt, amid the noise, and crowd, and glare, more intensely the imperturbable stillness of his own contemplations. His means of comfortable support were mainly supplied by a shop in Skinner-street, where, under the auspices of "M. J. Godwin & Co.," the prettiest and wisest books for children issued,

which old-fashioned parents presented to their children without suspecting that the graceful lessons of piety and goodness which charmed away the selfishness of infancy were published, and sometimes revised, and now and then written, by a philosopher whom they would scarcely venture to name! He met the exigencies which the vicissitudes of business sometimes caused with the trusting simplicity which marked his course—he asked his friends for aid without scruple, considering that their means were justly the due of one who toiled in thought for their inward life, and had little time to provide for his own outward existence; and took their excuses, when offered, without doubt or offence. The very next day after I had been honoured and delighted by an introduction to him at Lamb's chambers, I was made still more proud and happy by his appearance at my own on such an errand, which my poverty, not my will, rendered abortive. After some pleasant chat on indifferent matters, he carelessly observed that he had a little bill for £150 falling due on the morrow, which he had forgotten till that morning, and desired the loan of the necessary amount for a few weeks. At first, in eager hope of being able thus to oblige one whom I regarded with admiration akin to awe, I began to consider whether it was possible for me to raise such a sum; but, alas! a moment's reflection sufficed to convince me that the hope was vain, and I was obliged, with much confusion, to assure my distinguished visitor how glad I should have been to serve him, but that I was only just starting as a special pleader, was obliged to write for magazines to help me on, and had not such a sum in the world. "Oh dear," said the philosopher, "I thought you were a young gentleman of fortune: —don't mention it—don't mention it; I shall do very well elsewhere;" and then, in the most gracious manner, reverted to our former topics, and sat in my small room for half an hour, as if to convince me that my want of fortune made no difference in his esteem. A slender tribute to the literature he had loved and served so well was accorded to him in the old age to which he attained, by the gift of a sinecure in the Exchequer of about £200 a year, connected with the custody of the Records; and the last time I saw him, he was heaving an immense key to unlock the musty treasures of which he was guardian—how unlike those he had unlocked, with finer talisman, for the astonishment and alarm of one generation, and the delight of all others!

JOHN THELWALL, who had once exulted in the appella-

tion of Citizen Thelwall, having been associated with Coleridge and Southey in their days of enthusiastical dreaming, though a more precise and practical reformer than either, was introduced by them to Lamb, and was welcomed to his circle in the true catholicism of its spirit, although its master cared nothing for the Roman virtue which Thelwall devotedly cherished, and which Horne Tooke kept in uncertain vibration between a rebellion and a hoax. Lamb justly esteemed Thelwall as a thoroughly honest man—not honest merely in reference to the moral relations of life, but to the processes of thought; one whose mind, acute, vigorous, and direct, perceived only the object immediately before it, and, undisturbed by collateral circumstances, reflected, with literal fidelity, the impression it received, and maintained it as sturdily against the beauty that might soften it, or the wisdom that might mould it, as against the tyranny that would stifle its expression. "If to be honest as the world goes is to be one man picked out of ten thousand," to be honest as the mind works is to be one man of a million; and such a man was Thelwall. Starting with imperfect education from the thraldom of domestic oppression, with slender knowledge but with fiery zeal, into the dangers of political enterprise, and treading fearlessly on the verge of sedition, he saw nothing before him but powers which he assumed to be despotism and vice, and rushed headlong to crush them. The point of time—just that when the accumulated force of public opinion had obtained a virtual mastery over the accumulated corruptions of ages, but when power, still unconvinced of its danger, presented its boldest front to opposing intellect, or strove to crush it in the cruelty of awaking fear—gave scope for the ardent temperament of an orator almost as poor in scholastic cultivation as in external fortune, but strong in integrity, and rich in burning words.

Thus passionate, Thelwall spoke boldly and vehemently—at a time when indignation was thought to be a virtue; but there is no reason to believe he ever meditated any treason, except that accumulated in the architectural sophistry of Lord Eldon, by which he proved a person who desired to awe the government into a change of policy to be guilty of compassing the king's death; as thus: that the king must resist the proposed alteration in his measures; that, resisting, he must be deposed; and that, being deposed, he must necessarily die—though his boldness of speech placed him in jeopardy, even after the acquittals of his simple-

minded associate Hardy, and his enigmatical instructor Tooke, who forsook him, and left him, when acquitted, to the mercy of the world. His life, which before this event had been one of self-denial and purity remarkable in a young man who had imbibed the impulses of revolutionary France, partook of considerable vicissitude. At one time he was raised, by his skill in correcting impediments of speech and teaching elocution as a science, into elegant competence; at other times saddened by the difficulties of poorly-requited literary toil and wholly unrequited patriotism; but he preserved his integrity and his cheerfulness—"a man of hope and forward-looking mind even to the last." Unlike Godwin, whose profound thoughts slowly struggled into form, and seldom found utterance in conversation, speech was, in him, all in all, his delight, his profession, his triumph, with little else than passion to inspire or colour it. The flaming orations of his "Tribune," rendered more piquant by the transparent masquerade of ancient history, which, in his youth, "touched moneyed worldlings with dismay," and infected the poor with dangerous anger, seemed vapid, spiritless, and shallow when addressed through the press to the leisure of the thoughtful. The light which glowed with so formidable a lustre before the evening audience, vanished on closer examination, and proved to be only a harmless phantom-vapour, which left no traces of destructive energy behind it.

Thelwall, in person small, compact, muscular, with a head denoting indomitable resolution, and features deeply furrowed by the ardent workings of the mind, was as energetic in all his pursuits and enjoyments as in political action. He was earnestly devoted to the Drama, and enjoyed its greatest representations with the freshness of a boy who sees a play for the first time. He hailed the kindred energy of Kean with enthusiastic praise, but, abjuring the narrowness of his political vision in matters of taste, did justice to the nobler qualities of Mrs. Siddons and her brothers. In literature and art, also, he relaxed the bigotry of his liberal intolerance, and expatiated in their wider fields with a taste more catholic. Here Lamb was ready with his sympathy, which, indeed, even the political zeal, that he did not share, was too hearted to repel. Although generally detesting lectures on literature as superficial and vapid substitutes for quiet reading, and recitations as unreal mockeries of the true Drama, he sometimes attended the entertainments, composed of both, which Thel-

wall, in the palmy days of his prosperity, gave at his house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, not on politics, which he had then forsaken for elocutionary science, though maintaining the principles of his youth, but partly on elocution, and partly on poetry and acting, into which he infused the fiery enthusiasm of his nature. Sometimes, indeed, his fervour animated his disquisitions on the philosophy of speech with greater warmth than he reserved for more attractive themes; the melted vowels were blended into a rainbow, or dispersed like fleecy clouds; and the theory of language was made interesting by the honesty and vigour of the speaker. Like all men who have been chiefly self-taught, he sometimes presented commonplaces as original discoveries with an air which strangers mistook for quackery; but they were unjust; to the speaker these were the product of his own meditation, though familiar to many, and not rarely possessed the charm of originality in their freshness. Lamb at least felt that it was good, among other companions of richer and more comprehensive intelligence, to have one friend who was undisturbed by misgiving either for himself or his cause; who enunciated wild paradox and worn-out commonplace with equal confidence; and who was ready to sacrifice ease, fortune, fame—everything but speech, and, if it had been possible, even *that*—to the cause of truth or friendship.

WILLIAM HAZLITT was for many years one of the brightest and most constant ornaments of Lamb's parties; linked to him in the firm bond of intellectual friendship, which remained unshaken in spite of some superficial differences, "short and far between," arising from Lamb's insensibility to Hazlitt's political animosities, and his adherence to Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, who shared them. Hazlitt, in his boyhood, had derived from his father that attachment to abstract truth for its own sake, and that inflexible determination to cherish it, which naturally predominated in the being of the minister of a small rural congregation, who cherished religious opinions adverse to those of the great body of his countrymen, and waged a spiritual warfare throughout his peaceful course. Thus disciplined, he was introduced to the friendship of youthful poets, in whom the dawn of the French Revolution had enkindled hope, and passion, and opinions tinctured with hope and passion, which he eagerly embraced; and when changes passed over the prospects of mankind, which induced them, in maturer years, to modify the doctrines they had taught, he

resented these defections almost as personal wrongs, and, when his pen found scope and his tongue utterance, wrote and spoke of them with such bitterness as can only spring from the depths of old affection. No writer, however, except Wilson, did such noble justice to the poetry of Wordsworth when most despised, and to the genius of Coleridge when most obscured; he cherished a true admiration for each in "the last recesses of the mind," and defended them with dogged resolution against the scorns and slights of the world. Still the superficial difference was, it seemed, too wide to admit of personal intercourse; and I do not think that during the many years which elapsed between my introduction to Lamb and Hazlitt's death, he ever met either of the poets at the rooms of the man they united in loving.

Although Mr. Hazlitt was thus staunch in his attachment to principles which he reverenced as true, he was by no means rigid in his mode of maintaining and illustrating them, but, on the contrary, frequently diminished the immediate effect of his reasonings by the prodigality and richness of the allusions with which he embossed them. He had as unquenchable a desire for truth as others have for wealth, or power, or fame; he pursued it with sturdy singleness of purpose, and enunciated it without favour or fear. But, besides that love of truth, that sincerity in pursuing it, and that boldness in telling it, he had also a fervent aspiration after the beautiful; a vivid sense of pleasure, and an intense consciousness of his own individual being, which sometimes produced obstacles to the current of speculation, by which it was broken into dazzling eddies or urged into devious windings. Acute, fervid, vigorous as his mind was, it wanted the one great central power of Imagination, which brings all the other faculties into harmonious action; multiplies them into each other; makes truth visible in the forms of beauty, and substitutes intellectual vision for proof. Thus, in him, truth and beauty held divided empire. In him, the spirit was willing, but the flesh was *strong;* and, when these contend, it is not difficult to anticipate the result; "for the power of beauty shall sooner transform honesty from what it is into a bawd, than the person of honesty shall transform beauty into its likeness." This "sometime paradox" was vividly exemplified in Hazlitt's personal history, his conversation, and his writings. To the solitudes of the country, in which he mused on "fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute," a temperament of unusual ardour had given an intense interest, akin to

that with which Rousseau has animated and oppressed the details of his early years.

He had not then, nor did he find till long afterward, power to embody his meditations and feelings in words. The consciousness of thoughts which he could not hope adequately to express increased his natural reserve, and he turned for relief to the art of painting, in which he might silently realize his dreams of beauty, and repay the loveliness of nature by fixing some of its fleeting aspects in immortal tints. A few old prints from the old masters awakened the spirit of emulation within him; the sense of beauty became identified in his mind with that of glory and duration; while the peaceful labour he enjoyed calmed the tumult in his veins, and gave steadiness to his pure and distant aim. He pursued the art with an earnestness and patience which he vividly describes in his essay "On the Pleasure of Painting," and to which he frequently reverted in the happiest moods of his conversation; and, although in this, his chosen pursuit, he failed, the passionate desire for success, and the long struggle to attain it, left deep traces in his mind, heightening his keen perception of external things, and mingling with all his speculations airy shapes and hues which he had vainly striven to transfer to canvass. A painter may acquire a fine insight into the nice distinctions of character—he may copy manners in words as he does in colours—but it may be apprehended that his course as a severe reasoner will be somewhat "troubled with thick-coming fancies." And if the successful pursuit of art may thus disturb the process of abstract contemplation, how much more may an unsatisfied ambition ruffle it; bid the dark threads of thought glitter with radiant fancies unrealized, and clothe the diagrams of speculation with the fragments of picture which the mind cherishes the more fondly because the hand refused to realize? What wonder, if, in the mind of an ardent youth, thus struggling in vain to give palpable existence to the shapes of loveliness which haunted him, "the homely beauty of the good old cause" should assume the fascinations not properly its own?

This association of beauty with reason diminished the immediate effect of Mr. Hazlitt's political essays, while it enhanced their permanent value. It was the fashion, in his lifetime, to denounce him as a sour Jacobin; but no description could be more unjust. Under the influence of some bitter feeling or some wayward fancy, he occasionally pour-

ed out a furious invective against those whom he regarded as the enemies of liberty, or as apostates from her cause; but, in general, the force of his expostulation, or his reasoning, was diverted (unconsciously to himself) by figures and phantasies, by fine and quaint allusions, by quotations from his favourite authors, introduced with singular felicity as respects the direct link of association, but tending, by their very beauty, to unnerve the mind of the reader, and substitute the sense of luxury for clear conviction or noble anger. In some of his essays, where the reasoning is most cogent, every other sentence contains some exquisite passage from Shakspeare, or Fletcher, or Wordsworth, trailing after it a line of golden associations; or some reference to a novel, over which we have a thousand times forgotten the wrongs of mankind, till, in the recurring shocks of pleasurable surprise, the main argument is forgotten. When, for example, he compares the position of certain political waverers to that of Clarissa Harlowe confronting the ravisher who would repeat his outrage, with the penknife pointed to her breast and her eyes uplifted to heaven, and describes them as having been, like her, trepanned into a house of ill fame near Pall Mall, and there defending their soiled virtue with their penknives, what reader, at the suggestion of the stupendous scene which the allusion directly revives, can think or care about the renegade of yesterday? Here, again, is felt the want of that imagination which brings all things into one, tinges all our thoughts and sympathies with one hue, and rejects every ornament which does not heighten or prolong the feeling which it seeks to embody.

Even when he retaliates on Southey for attacking his old co-patriots, the poetical associations which bitter remembrance suggests almost neutralize the vituperation; he brings every "flower which sad embroidery wears to strew the laureate hearse," where ancient regards are interred, and merges all the censures of the changed politician in praise of the simple dignity and the generous labours of a singularly noble and unsullied life. So little does he regard the unity of sentiment in his compositions, that in his "Letter to Gifford," after a series of just and bitter retorts on his maligner as "the fine link which connects literature with the police," he takes a fancy to teach that "ultra-crepidarian critic" his own theory of the natural disinterestedness of the human mind, and develops it, not in the dry, hard, mathematical style in which it was first enunciated,

but "o'er informed" with the glow of sentiment, and terminating in an eloquent rhapsody. This latter portion of the letter is one of the noblest of his effusions, but it entirely destroys the first in the mind of the reader; for who, when thus contemplating the living wheels on which human benevolence is borne onwards in its triumphant career, and the spirit with which they are instinct, can think of the literary wasp which had settled for a moment upon them, and who had just before been mercilessly transfixed with minikin arrows?

But the most signal example of the influences which "the show of things" exercised over Mr. Hazlitt's mind was the setting up the Emperor Napoleon as his idol. He strove to justify this predilection to himself by referring it to the revolutionary origin of his hero, and the contempt with which he trampled upon the claims of legitimacy, and humbled the pride of kings. But if his "only love" thus sprung "from his only hate," it was not cherished in its blossom by antipathies. If there had been nothing in his mind which tended to aggrandizement and glory, and which would fain reconcile the principles of freedom with the lavish accumulation of power, he might have desired the triumph of young tyranny over legitimate thrones, but he would scarcely have watched its progress and its fall "like a lover and a child." His feeling for Bonaparte in exile was not a sentiment of respect for fallen greatness; not a desire to trace "the soul of goodness in things evil;" not a loathing of the treatment the Emperor received from "his cousin kings" in the day of adversity; but entire affection mingling with the current of the blood, and pervading the moral and intellectual being. Nothing less than this strong attachment, at once personal and refined, would have enabled him to encounter the toil of collecting and arranging facts and dates for four volumes of narrative, which constitute his "Life of Napoleon"—a drudgery too abhorrent to his habits of mind as a thinker to be sustained by any stimulus which the prospect of remuneration or the hope of applause could supply. It is not so much in the ingenious excuses which he discovers for the worst acts of his hero—offered even for the midnight execution of the Duke d'Enghien and the invasion of Spain—that the stamp of personal devotion is obvious, as in the graphic force with which he has delineated the short-lived splendours of the imperial court, and "the trivial fond records" he has gathered of every vestige of human feeling by which he could

reconcile the imperial cynic to the species he scorned. The first two volumes of his work, although redeemed by scattered thoughts of true originality and depth, are often confused and spiritless; the characters of the principal revolutionists are drawn too much in the style of awkward, sprawling caricatures; but when the hero casts all his rivals into the distance, erects himself the individual enemy of England, consecrates his power by religious ceremonies, and defines it by the circle of a crown, the author's strength becomes concentrated; his narrative assumes an epic dignity and fervour; dallies with the flowers of usurped prerogative, and glows with "the long-resounding march and energy divine." How happy and proud is he to picture the meeting of the Emperor with the Pope, and the grandeurs of the coronation! How he grows wanton in celebrating the fêtes of the Tuileries, as "presenting all the elegance of enchanted pageants," and laments them as "gone like a fairy revel!" How he "lives along the line" of Austerlitz, and rejoices in its thunder, and hails its setting sun, and exults in the minutest details of the subsequent meeting of the conquered sovereigns at the feet of the conqueror! How he expatiates on the fatal marriage with "the deadly Austrian" (as Mr. Cobbett justly called Maria Louisa), as though it were a chapter in romance, and sheds the grace of beauty on the imperial picture! How he kindles with martial ardour as he describes the preparations against Russia; musters the myriads of barbarians with a show of dramatic justice; and fondly lingers among the brief triumphs of Moskwa on the verge of the terrible catastrophe! The narrative of that disastrous expedition is indeed written with a master's hand; we see the "grand army" marching to its destruction through the immense perspective: the wild hordes flying before the terror of its "coming;" the barbaric magnificence of Moscow towering in the remote distance; and when we gaze upon the sacrificial conflagration of the Kremlin, we feel that it is worthy to become the funeral pile of the conqueror's glories. It is well for the readers of this splendid work that there is more in it of the painter than of the metaphysician; that its style glows with the fervour of battle, or stiffens with the spoils of victory; yet we wonder that this monument to imperial grandeur should be raised from the dead level of Jacobinism by an honest and profound thinker. The solution is, that although he was this, he was also more—that, in opinion, he was devoted to the cause of the

people; but that, in feeling, he required some individual object of worship; that he selected Napoleon as one in whose origin and career he might at once impersonate his principles and gratify his affections; and that he adhered to his own idea with heroic obstinacy, when the "child and champion of the Republic" openly sought to repress all feeling and thought but such as he could cast in his own iron moulds, and scoffed at popular enthusiasm even while it bore him to the accomplishment of his loftiest desires.

Mr. Hazlitt had little inclination to talk or write about contemporary authors, and still less to read them. He was with difficulty persuaded to look into the Scotch novels, but, when he did so, he found them old in substance, though new in form, read them with as much avidity as the rest of the world, and expressed better than any one else what all the world felt about them. His hearty love of them, however, did not diminish, but aggravate his dislike of the political opinions so zealously and consistently maintained of their great author; and yet the strength of his hatred towards that which was accidental and transitory only set off the unabated power of his regard for the great and the lasting. Coleridge and Wordsworth were not moderns to him, for they were the inspirers of his youth, which was his own antiquity, and the feelings which were the germ of their poetry had sunk deep into his heart. With the exception of the works of these, and of his friends Barry Cornwall and Sheridan Knowles, in whose successes he rejoiced, he held modern literature in slight esteem, and regarded the discoveries of science and the visions of optimism with an undazzled eye. His "large discourse of reason" looked not before, but after. He felt it a sacred duty, as a lover of genius and art, to defend the fame of the mighty dead. When the old painters were assailed in "The Catalogue Raisonné of the British Institution," he was "touched with noble anger." All his own vain longings after the immortality of the works which were libelled—all the tranquillity and beauty they had shed into his soul—all his comprehension of the sympathy and delight of thousands, which, accumulating through long time, had attested their worth, were fused together to dazzle and subdue the daring critic who would disturb the judgment of ages. So, when a popular poet assailed the fame of Rousseau, seeking to reverse the decision of posterity on what that great though unhappy writer had achieved by

suggesting the opinion of people of condition in his neighbourhood on the figure he made to their apprehensions while in the service of Madame de Warrens, he vindicated the prerogatives of genius with the true logic of passion. Few things irritated him more than the claims set up for the present generation to be wiser and better than those which have gone before it. He had no power of imagination to embrace the golden clouds which hung over the Future, but he rested and expatiated in the Past. To his apprehension, human good did not appear a slender shoot of yesterday, like the bean-stalk in the fairy tale, aspiring to the skies, and leading to an enchanted castle, but a huge growth of intertwisted fibres, grasping the earth by numberless roots of custom, habit, and affection, and bearing vestiges of "a thousand storms, a thousand thunders."

When I first met Hazlitt in the year 1815, he was staggering under the blow of Waterloo. The reappearance of his imperial idol on the coast of France, and his triumphant march to Paris, like a fairy vision, had excited his admiration and sympathy to the utmost pitch; and though in many respects sturdily English in feeling, he could scarcely forgive the valour of the conquerors, and bitterly resented the captivity of the emperor in St. Helena which followed it as if he had sustained a personal wrong. On this subject only he was "eaten up with passion;" on all others he was the fairest, the most candid of reasoners. His countenance was then handsome, but marked with a painful expression; his black hair, which had curled stiffly over his temples, had scarcely received its first tints of gray; his gait was awkward; his dress was neglected; and, in the company of strangers, his bashfulness was almost painful; but when, in the society of Lamb and one or two others, he talked on his favourite theme of old English books or old Italian pictures, no one's conversation could be more delightful. The poets, from intercourse with whom he had drawn so much of his taste, and who had contributed to shed the noble infection of beauty through his reasoning faculties, had scarcely the opportunity of appreciating their progress. It was in after years, by the fireside of "the Lambs," that his tongue was gradually loosened, and his passionate thoughts found appropriate words. There, his struggles to express the fine conceptions with which his mind was filled were encouraged by entire sympathy; there he began to stammer out his just and original conceptions of Chaucer and Spenser, and other English poets and

prose writers, more talked of, though not better known, by their countrymen; there he was understood and dexterously cheered by Miss Lamb, whose nice discernment of his first efforts in conversation were dwelt upon by him with affectionate gratitude, even when most out of humour with the world. When he mastered his diffidence, he did not talk for effect, to dazzle, or surprise, or annoy, but with the most simple and honest desire to make his view of the subject in hand entirely apprehended by his hearer. There was sometimes an obvious struggle to do this to his own satisfaction; he seemed labouring to drag his thought to light from its deep lurking-place; and, with timid distrust of that power of expression which he had found so late in life, he often betrayed a fear lest he had failed to make himself understood, and recurred to the subject again and again, that he might be assured he had succeeded. With a certain doggedness of manner, he showed nothing pragmatical or exclusive; he never drove a principle to its utmost possible consequences, but, like Locksley, "allowed for the wind." For some years previous to his death, he observed an entire abstinence from fermented liquors, which he had once quaffed with the proper relish he had for all the good things of this life, but which he courageously resigned when he found the indulgence perilous to his health and faculties. The cheerfulness with which he made this sacrifice was one of the most amiable traits in his character. He had no censure for others, who, in the same dangers, were less wise or less resolute; nor did he think he had earned, by his own constancy, any right to intrude advice which he knew, if wanted, must be unavailing. Nor did he profess to be a convert to the general system of abstinence, which was advanced by one of his kindest and staunchest friends; he avowed that he yielded to necessity; and instead of avoiding the sight of that which he could no longer taste, he was seldom so happy as when he sat with friends at their wine, participating the sociality of the time, and renewing his own past enjoyment in that of his companions, without regret and without envy. Like Dr. Johnson, he made himself poor amends for the loss of wine by drinking tea, not so largely, indeed, as the hero of Boswell, but at least of equal potency, for he might have challenged Mrs. Thrale and all her sex to make stronger tea than his own. In society, as in politics, he was no flincher. He loved "to hear the chimes at midnight," without considering them as a summons to rise. At these seasons, when in his

happiest mood, he used to dwell on the conversational powers of his friends, and live over again the delightful hours he had passed with them, repeat the pregnant puns that one had made, tell over again a story with which another had convulsed the room, or expatiate on the eloquence of a third, always best pleased when he could detect some talent which was unregarded by the world, and giving alike to the celebrated and the unknown due honour.

Mr. Hazlitt delivered three courses of lectures at the Surrey Institution, on *The English Poets;* on *The English Comic Writers;* and on *The Age of Elizabeth*, which Lamb (under protest against lectures in general) regularly attended, an earnest admirer, amid crowds with whom the lecturer had "an imperfect sympathy." They consisted chiefly of Dissenters, who agreed with him in his hatred of Lord Castlereagh, and his love of religious freedom, but who "loved no plays;" of Quakers, who approved him as the earnest opponent of slavery and capital punishment, but who "heard no music;" of citizens, devoted to the main chance, who had a hankering after "the improvement of the mind," but to whom his favourite doctrine of its natural disinterestedness was a riddle; of a few enemies who came to sneer; and a few friends, who were eager to learn and to admire. The comparative insensibility of the bulk of his audience to his finest passages sometimes provoked him to awaken their attention by points which broke the train of his discourse; after which, he could make himself amends by some abrupt paradox which might set their prejudices on edge, and make them fancy they were shocked. He startled many of them at the onset by observing that, since Jacob's dream, "the heavens have gone farther off, and become astronomical;" a fine extravagance, which the ladies and gentlemen, who had grown astronomical themselves under the preceding lecturer, felt called on to resent as an attack on their severer studies. When he read a well-known extract from Cowper, comparing a poor cottager with Voltaire, and had pronounced the line, "A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew," they broke into a joyous shout of self-gratulation that they were so much wiser than the scornful Frenchman. When he passed by Mrs. Hannah More with observing that "she had written a great deal which he had never read," a voice gave expression to the general commiseration and surprise by calling out "More pity for you!" They were confounded at his reading with more emphasis, perhaps, than discretion,

Gay's epigrammatic lines on Sir Richard Blackstone, in which scriptural persons are too freely hitched into rhyme; but he went doggedly on to the end; and, by his perseverance, baffled those who, if he had acknowledged himself wrong by stopping, would have visited him with an outburst of displeasure which he felt to be gathering. He once had a more edifying advantage over them. He was enumerating the humanities which endeared Dr. Johnson to his mind, and at the close of an agreeable catalogue, mentioned, as last and noblest, "his carrying the poor victim of disease and dissipation on his back through Fleet-street," at which a titter arose from some, who were struck by the picture as ludicrous, and a murmur from others, who deemed the allusion unfit for ears polite: he paused for an instant, and then added, in his sturdiest and most impressive manner, "an act which realizes the parable of the Good Samaritan;" at which his moral and his delicate hearers shrunk, rebuked, into deep silence. He was not eloquent, in the true sense of the term; for his thoughts were too weighty to be moved along by the shallow stream of feeling which an evening's excitement can rouse. He wrote all his lectures, and read them as they were written; but his deep voice and earnest manner suited his matter well. He seemed to dig into his subject, and not in vain. In delivering his longer quotations, he had scarcely continuity enough for the versification of Shakspeare and Milton, "with linked sweetness long drawn out;" but he gave Pope's brilliant satire and delightful compliments, which are usually complete within the couplet, with an elegance and point which the poet himself, could he have heard, would have felt as indicating their highest praise.

Mr. Hazlitt, having suffered for many years from derangement of the digestive organs, for which perhaps a moderate use of fermented liquors would have been preferable to abstinence, solaced only by the intense tincture of tea in which he found refuge, worn out at last, died on the 18th of September, 1830, at the age of fifty-two. Lamb frequently visited him during his sufferings, which were not, as has been erroneously suggested, aggravated by the want of needful comforts; for, although his careless habits had left no provision for sickness, his friends gladly acknowledged, by their united aid, the deep intellectual obligations due to the great thinker. In a moment of acute pain, when the needless apprehension for the future rushed upon him, he

dictated a brief and peremptory letter to the editor of the "Edinburgh Review," requiring a considerable remittance, to which he had no claim but that of former remunerated services, which the friend, who obeyed his bidding, feared might excite displeasure; but he mistook Francis Jeffrey; the sum demanded was received by return of post, with the most anxious wishes for Hazlitt's recovery—just too late for him to understand his error. Lamb joined a few friends in attending his funeral in the church-yard of St. Anne's, Soho, where he was interred, and felt his loss, not so violently at the time, as mournfully in the frequent recurrence of the sense that a chief source of intellectual pleasure was stopped. His personal frailties are nothing to us now; his thoughts survive; in them we have his better part entire, and in them must be traced his true history. The real events of his life are not to be traced in its external changes; as his engagement by the "Morning Chronicle," or his transfer of his services to the "Times," or his introduction to the "Edinburgh Review;" but in the progress and development of his fine understanding as nurtured, and checked, and swayed by his affections. His warfare was within; its spoils are ours.

One of the soundest and most elegant scholars whom the school of Christ's Hospital ever produced, Mr. THOMAS BARNES, was a frequent guest at Lamb's chambers in the Temple; and though the responsibilities he undertook before Lamb quitted that, his happiest abode, prevented him from visiting often at Great Russell-street, at Islington, or Enfield, he was always ready to assist by the kind word of the powerful journal in which he became most potent, the expanding reputation of his schoolmate and friend. After establishing a high social and intellectual character at Cambridge, he had entered the legal profession as a special pleader, but was prevented from applying the needful devotion to that laborious pursuit by violent rheumatic affections, which he solaced by writing critiques and essays of rare merit. So shattered did he appear in health, that when his friends learned that he had accepted the editorship of the "Times" newspaper, they almost shuddered at the attempt as suicidal, and anticipated a speedy ruin to his constitution from the pressure of constant labour and anxiety on the least healthful hours of toil. But he had judged better than they of his own physical and intellectual resources, and the mode in which the grave responsibility and constant exertion of his office would affect both;

for the regular effort consolidated his feverish strength, gave evenness and tranquillity to a life of serious exertion, and supplied, for many years, power equal to the perpetual demand; affording a striking example how, when finely attuned, the mind can influence the body to its uses. The facile adaptation of his intellect to his new duties was scarcely less remarkable than the mastery it achieved over his desultory habits and physical infirmities; for, until then, it had seemed more refined than vigorous—more elegant than weighty—too fastidious to endure the supervision and arrangement of innumerable reports, paragraphs, and essays; but, while a scholarly grace was shed by him through all he wrote or moulded, the needful vigour was never wanting to the high office of superintending the great daily miracle; to the discipline of its various contributors; or to the composition of articles which he was always ready, on the instant of emergency, to supply.

Mr. Barnes, linked by school associations with Leigh Hunt, filled the theatrical department of criticism in the "Examiner" during the period when the Editor's imprisonment for alleged libel on the Prince Regent precluded his attendance on the theatres. It was no easy office of friendship to supply the place of Hunt in the department of criticism he may be almost said to have invented; but Mr. Barnes, though in a different style, well sustained the attractions of the "Theatrical Examiner." Fortunately, the appearance of Mr. Kean during this interval enabled him to gratify the profound enthusiasm of his nature, without doing violence to the fastidious taste to which it was usually subjected. He perceived at once the vivid energy of the new actor; understood his faults to be better than the excellences of ordinary aspirants; and hailed him with the most generous praise—the more valuable as it proceeded from one rarely induced to render applause, and never yielding it except on the conviction of true excellence. Hazlitt, who contributed theatrical criticism, at the same time, to the "Morning Chronicle," and who astounded the tame mediocrity of Mr. Perry's subordinates by his earnest eulogy, and Barnes had the satisfaction of first appreciating this unfriended performer, and, while many were offended by the daring novelty of his style, and more stood aloof with fashionable indifference from a deserted theatre, of awakening that spirit which retrieved the fortunes of Old Drury—which revived, for a brilliant interval, the interest of the English stage, and which bore the actor on a tide of

intoxicating success that "knew no retiring ebb" till it was unhappily checked by his own lamentable frailties.*

The manners of Mr. Barnes, though extremely courteous, were so reserved as to seem cold to strangers; but they were changed, as by magic, by the contemplation of moral or intellectual beauty, awakened in a small circle. I well remember him, late one evening in the year 1816, when only two or three friends remained with Lamb and his sister, long after "we had heard the chimes at midnight," holding inveterate but delighted controversy with Lamb respecting the tragic power of Dante as compared with that of Shakspeare. Dante was scarcely known to Lamb, for he was unable to read the original, and Cary's noble translation was not then known to him; and Barnes aspired to the glory of affording him a glimpse of a kindred greatness in the mighty Italian with that which he had conceived incapable of human rivalry. The face of the advocate of Dante, heavy when in repose, grew bright with earnest admiration as he quoted images, sentiments, dialogues, against Lamb, who had taken his own immortal stand on Lear, and urged the supremacy of the child-changed father against all the possible Ugolinos of the world. Some reference having been made by Lamb to his own exposition of Lear, which had been recently published in a magazine, edited by Leigh Hunt, under the title of "The Reflector," touched another and a tenderer string of feeling, turned a little the course

* As the essays of Mr. Barnes have never been collected, I take leave to present to the reader the conclusion of his article in the "Examiner" of February 27th, 1814, on the first appearance of Mr. Kean in Richard:

"In the heroic parts, he animated every spectator with his own feelings; when he exclaimed 'that a thousand hearts were swelling in his bosom,' the house shouted to express their accordance to a truth so nobly exemplified by the energy of his voice, by the grandeur of his mien. His death-scene was the grandest conception, and executed in the most impressive manner; it was a piece of noble poetry, expressed by action instead of language. He fights desperately: he is disarmed and exhausted of all bodily strength: he disdains to fall, and his strong volition keeps him standing: he fixes that head, full of intellectual and heroic power, directly on the enemy: he bears up his chest with an expression which seems swelling with more than human spirit: he holds his uplifted arm in calm but dreadful defiance of his conqueror. But he is but man, and he falls after this sublime effort senseless to the ground. We have felt our eyes gush on reading a passage of exquisite poetry. We have been ready to leap at sight of a noble picture, but we never felt stronger emotion, more overpowering sensations, than were kindled by the novel sublimity of this catastrophe. In matters of mere taste, there will be a difference of opinion; but here there was no room to doubt, no reason could be imprudent enough to hesitate. Every heart beat an echo responsive to this call of elevated nature, and yearned with fondness toward the man who, while he excited admiration for himself, made also his admirers glow with a warmth of conscious superiority, because they were able to appreciate such an exalted degree of excellence."

of his enthusiasm the more to inflame it, and brought out a burst of affectionate admiration for his friend, then scarcely known to the world, which was the more striking for its contrast with his usually sedate demeanour. I think I see him now, leaning forward upon the little table on which the candles were just expiring in their sockets, his fists clenched, his eyes flashing, and his face bathed in perspiration, exclaiming to Lamb, "And do I not know, my boy, that you have written about Shakspeare, and Shakspeare's own Lear, finer than any one ever did in the world, and won't I let the world know it?" He was right; there is no criticism in the world more worthy of the genius it estimates than that little passage referred to on Lear; few felt it then like Barnes; thousands have read it since here, and tens of thousands in America, and have felt as he did; and will answer for the truth of that excited hour.

Mr. Barnes combined singular acuteness of understanding with remarkable simplicity of character. If he was skilful in finding out those who duped others, he made some amends to the world of sharpers by being abundantly duped himself. He might caution the public to be on their guard against impostors of every kind, but his heart was open to every species of delusion which came in the shape of misery. Poles—real and theatrical—refugees, pretenders of all kinds, found their way to the "Times" inner office, and though the inexorable editor excluded their lucubrations from the precious space of its columns, he rarely omitted to make them amends by large contributions from his purse. The intimate acquaintance with all the varieties of life forced on him by his position in the midst of a moving epitome of the world, which vividly reflected them all, failed to teach him distrust or discretion. He was a child in the centre of the most feverish agitations; a dupe in the midst of the quickest apprehensions; and while, with unbending pride, he repelled the slightest interference with his high functions from the greatest quarters, he was open to every tale from the lowest which could win from him personal aid. Rarely as he was seen in his later years in Lamb's circle, he is indestructibly associated with it in the recollection of the few survivors of its elder days; and they will lament with me that the influences for good which he shed largely on all the departments of busy life, should have necessarily left behind them such slender memorials of one of the kindest, the wisest, and the best of men who have ever enjoyed signal opportunities of moulding public

opinion, and who have turned them to the noblest and the purest uses.

Among Lamb's early acquaintances and constant admirers was an artist whose checkered career and melancholy death gave an interest to the recollections with which he is linked independent of that which belongs to his pictures —BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. The ruling misfortune of his life was somewhat akin to that disproportion in Hazlitt's mind to which I have adverted, but productive in his case of more disastrous results—the possession of two different faculties not harmonized into one, and struggling for mastery—in that disarrangement of the faculties in which the unproductive talent becomes not a mere negative, but neutralizes the other, and even turns its good into evil. Haydon, the son of a respectable tradesman at Plymouth, was endowed with two capacities, either of which, exclusively cultivated with the energy of his disposition, might have led to fortune—the genius of a painter, and the passionate logic of a controversialist; talents scarcely capable of being blended in harmonious action except under the auspices of prosperity such as should satisfy the artist by fame, and appease the literary combatant by triumph.

The combination of a turbulent vivacity of mind with a fine aptitude for the most serene of arts was rendered more infelicitous by the circumstances of the young painter's early career. He was destined painfully to work his way at once through the lower elements of his art and the difficulties of adverse fortune; and though by indomitable courage and unwearied industry he became master of anatomic science, of colouring, and of perspective, and achieved a position in which his efforts might be fairly presented to the notice of the world, his impetuous temperament was yet farther ruffled by the arduous and complicated struggle. With boundless intellectual ambition, he sought to excel in the loftiest department of his art, and undertook the double responsibility of painting great pictures and of creating the taste which should appreciate, and enforcing the patronage which should reward them.

The patronage of high art, not then adopted by the government, and far beyond the means of individuals of the middle class, necessarily appertained to a few members of the aristocracy, who alone could encourage and remunerate the painters of history. Although the beginning of Mr. Haydon's career was not uncheered by aristocratic favour, *the contrast* between the greatness of his own conceptions

and the humility of the course which prudence suggested as necessary to obtain for himself the means of developing them on canvass, fevered his nature, which, ardent in gratitude for the appreciation and assistance of the wealthy to a degree which might even be mistaken for servility, was also impatient of the general indifference to the cause of which he sought to be, not only the ornament, but, unhappily for him, also the champion. Alas! he there "perceived a divided duty." Had he been contented silently to paint—to endure obscurity and privation for a while, gradually to mature his powers of execution and soften the rigour of his style and of his virtue, he might have achieved works not only as vast in outline and as beautiful in portions as those which he exhibited, but so harmonious in their excellences as to charm away opposition, and insure speedy reputation, moderate fortune, and lasting fame. But resolved to battle for that which he believed to be "the right," he rushed into a life-long contest with the Royal Academy, frequently suspended the gentle labours of the pencil for the vehement use of the pen, and thus gave to his course an air of defiance, which prevented the calm appreciation of his nobler works, and increased the mischief by reaction. Indignant of the scorns "that patient merit of the unworthy takes," he sometimes fancied scorns which *impatient* merit in return imputes to the worthy; and thus, instead of enjoying the most tranquil of lives (which a painter's should be), led one of the most animated, restless, and broken. The necessary consequence of this disproportion was a series of pecuniary embarrassments, the direct result of his struggle with fortune; a succession of feverish triumphs and disappointments, the fruits of his contest with power; and, worse perhaps than either, the frequent diversion of his own genius from its natural course, and the hurried and imperfect development of its most majestic conceptions. To paint as finely as he sometimes did in the ruffled pauses of his passionate controversy, and amid the terrors of impending want, was to display large innate resources of skill and high energy of mind; but how much more unquestionable fame might he have attained if his disposition had permitted him to be content with charming the world of art, instead of attempting also to instruct or reform it.

Mr. Haydon's course, though thus troubled, was one of constant animation, and illustrated by hours of triumph, the more radiant because they were snatched from adverse

fortune and a reluctant people. The exhibition of a single picture by an artist at war with the Academy, which exhibited a thousand pictures at the same price—creating a sensation not only among artists and patrons of art, but among the most secluded literary circles, and engaging the highest powers of criticism—was itself a splendid occurrence in life; and twice at least—in the instance of the Entry into Jerusalem and the Lazarus—was crowned with signal success. It was a proud moment for the daring painter when, at the opening of the first of these exhibitions, while the crowd of visitors, distinguished in rank or talent, stood doubting whether, in the countenance of the chief figure, the daring attempt to present an aspect differing from that which had enkindled the devotion of ages — to mingle the human with the divine, resolution with sweetness, dignified composure with the anticipation of mighty suffering—had not failed, Mrs. Siddons walked slowly up to the centre of the room, surveyed it in silence for a minute or two, and then ejaculated, in her deep, low, thrilling voice, "It is perfect!" quelled all opposition, and removed the doubt, from his own mind at least, forever.

Although the great body of artists to whose corporate power Mr. Haydon was so passionately opposed naturally stood aside from his path, it was cheered by the attention and often by the applause of the chief literary spirits of the age, who were attracted by a fierce intellectual struggle. Sir Walter Scott, Wordsworth, Hazlitt, Godwin, Shelley, Hunt, Coleridge, Lamb, Keats, and many young writers for periodical works, in the freshness of unhackneyed authorship, took an interest in a course so gallant though so troublous, which excited their sympathy, yet did not force them to the irksome duty of unqualified praise. Almost in the outset of his career, Wordsworth addressed to him a sonnet, in heroic strain, associating the artist's calling with his own—making common cause with him, "while the whole world seemed adverse to desert;" admonishing him "still to be strenuous for the bright reward, and in the soul admit of no decay;" and long after, when the poet had, by a wiser perseverance, gradually created the taste which appreciated his works, he celebrated, in another sonnet, the fine autumnal conception in the picture of Napoleon on the rock of St. Helena, with his back to the spectator, contemplating the blank sea, left desolate by the sunken sun. The conqueror of Napoleon also recognized the artist's claims, and supplied him with another great subject in the contemplation

of the solitude of Waterloo by its hero ten years after the victory.

Mr. Haydon's vividness of mind burst out in his conversation, which, though somewhat broken and rugged, like his career, had also, like that, a vein of beauty streaking it. Having associated with most of the remarkable persons of his time, and seen strange varieties of "many-coloured life" —gifted with a rapid perception of character, and a painter's eye for effect—he was able to hit off, with startling facility, sketches in words which lived before the hearer. His anxieties and sorrows did not destroy the buoyancy of his spirits, or rob the convivial moment of its prosperity, so that he struggled, and toiled, and laughed, and triumphed, and failed, and hoped on, till the waning of life approached, and found him still in opposition to the world, and far from the threshold of fortune. The object of his literary exertions was partially attained: the national attention had been directed to high art, but he did not personally share in the benefits he had greatly contributed to win. Even his cartoon of the Curse in Paradise failed to obtain a prize when he entered the arena with unfledged youths for competitors; and the desertion of the exhibition of his two pictures of Aristides and Nero, at the Egyptian Hall, by the public, for the neighbouring exposure of the clever manikin, General Tom Thumb, quite vanquished him. It was indeed a melancholy contrast: the unending succession of bright crowds thronging the levees of the small abortion, and the dim and dusty room in which the two latest historical pictures of the veteran hung for hours without a visitor. Opposition, abuse, even neglect, he could have borne, but the sense of ridicule involved in such a juxtaposition drove him to despair. No one who knew him ever apprehended from his disasters such a catastrophe as that which closed them. He had always cherished a belief in the religion of our Church, and avowed it among scoffing unbelievers; and that belief he asserted even in the wild fragments he penned in his last terrible hour. His friends thought that even the sense of the injustice of the world would have contributed, with his undimmed consciousness of his own powers, to enable him to endure. In his domestic relations also he was happy, blessed in the affection of a wife of great beauty and equal discretion, who, by gentler temper and serener wisdom than his own, had assisted and soothed him in all his anxieties and griefs, and whose image was so identified in his mind with the beautiful as to impress its character

on all the forms of female loveliness he had created. Those who knew him best feel the strongest assurance that, notwithstanding the appearances of preparation which attended his extraordinary suicide, his mind was shattered to pieces—all distorted and broken—with only one feeling left entire, the perversion of which led to the deed, a hope to awaken sympathy in death for those whom living he could not shelter. The last hurried lines he wrote, entitled "Haydon's last Thoughts," consisted of a fevered comparison between the Duke of Wellington and Napoleon, in which he seemed to wish to repair some supposed injustice which in speech or writing he had done to the Conqueror. It was inclosed in a letter addressed to three friends, written in the hour of his death, and containing sad fragmental memorials of those passionate hopes, fierce struggles, and bitter disappointments which brought him through distraction to the grave.

A visit of COLERIDGE was always regarded by Lamb as an opportunity to afford a rare gratification to a few friends, who he knew would prize it; and I well remember the flush of prideful pleasure which came over his face as he would hurry, on his way to the India House, into the office in which I was a pupil, and stammer out the welcome invitation for the evening. This was true self-sacrifice; for Lamb would have infinitely preferred having his inspired friend to himself and his sister for a brief renewal of the old Salutation delights; but, I believe, he never permitted himself to enjoy this exclusive treat. The pleasure he conferred was great; for of all celebrated persons I ever saw, Coleridge alone surpassed the expectation created by his writings; for he not only was, but appeared to be, greater than the noblest things he had written.

Lamb used to speak, sometimes with a moistened eye and quivering lip, of Coleridge when young, and wish that we could have seen him in the spring-time of his genius, at a supper in the little sanded parlour of the old Salutation hostel. The promise of those days was never realized by the execution of any of the mighty works he planned; but the very failure gave a sort of mournful interest to the "large discourse, looking before and after," to which we were enchanted listeners; to the wisdom which lives only in our memories, and must perish with them.

From Coleridge's early works, some notion may be gleaned of what he *was;* when the steep ascent of fame rose directly before him, while he might loiter to dally with

the expectation of its summit, without ignobly shrinking from its labours. His endowments at that time—the close of the last century—when literature had faded into a fashion of poor language, must have seemed, to a mind and heart like Lamb's, no less than miraculous.

A rich store of classical knowledge; a sense of the beautiful, almost verging on the effeminate; a facile power of melody, varying from the solemn stops of the organ to a bird-like flutter of airy sound; the glorious faculty of poetic hope, exerted on human prospects, and presenting its results with the vividness of prophecy—a power of imaginative reasoning which peopled the nearer ground of contemplation with thoughts

> "All plumed like ostriches, like eagles bathed,
> As full of spirit as the month of May,
> And gorgeous as the sun at midsummer,"

endowed the author of "The Ancient Mariner" and "Christabel." Thus gifted, he glided from youth into manhood, as a fairy voyager on a summer sea, to eddy round and round in dazzling circles, and to make little progress, at last, towards any of those thousand mountain-summits which, glorified by aerial tints, rose before him at the extreme verge of the vast horizon of his genius. "The Ancient Mariner," printed with the "Lyrical Ballads," one of his earliest works, is still his finest poem—at once the most vigorous in design and chaste in execution—developing the intensest human affection, amid the wildest scenery of a poet's dream. Nothing was too bright to hope from such a dawn. The mind of Coleridge seemed the harbinger of the golden years his enthusiasm predicted and painted—of those days of peace on earth and good-will among men which the best and greatest minds have rejoiced to anticipate—and the earnest belief in which is better than all frivolous enjoyments, all worldly wisdom, all worldly success. And if the noontide of his genius did not fulfil his youth's promise of manly vigour, nor the setting of his earthly life honour it by an answering serenity of greatness, they still have left us abundant reason to be grateful that the glorious fragments of his mighty and imperfect being were ours. Cloud after cloud of German metaphysics rolled before his imagination, which it had power to irradiate with fantastic beauty, and to break into a thousand shifting forms of grandeur, though not to conquer; mist after mist ascended from those streams where earth and sky should have blended in one imagery, and were turned by its obscured

glory to radiant haze; indulgence in the fearful luxury of that talismanic drug, which opens glittering scenes of fantastic beauty on the waking soul to leave it in arid desolation, too often veiled it in partial eclipse, and blended fitful light with melancholy blackness over its vast domain; but the great central light remained unquenched, and cast its gleams through every department of human knowledge. A boundless capacity to receive and retain intellectual treasures made him the possessor of vaster stores of lore, classical, antiquarian, historical, biblical, and miscellaneous, than were ever vouchsafed, at least in our time, to a mortal being; goodly structures of divine philosophy rose before him like exhalations on the table-land of that his prodigious knowledge; but, alas! there was a deficiency of the power of voluntary action which would have left him unable to embody the shapes of a shepherd's dreams, and made him feeble as an infant before the overpowering majesty of his own! Hence his literary life became one splendid and sad prospectus, resembling only the portal of a mighty temple which it was forbidden us to enter, but whence strains of rich music issuing "took the prisoned soul and lapped it in Elysium," and fragments of oracular wisdom startled the thought they could not satisfy.

Hence the riches of his mind were developed, not in writing, but in his speech—conversation I can scarcely call it—which no one who once heard can ever forget. Unable to work in solitude, he sought the gentle stimulus of social admiration, and under its influence poured forth, without stint, the marvellous resources of a mind rich in the spoils of time—richer—richer far in its own glorious imagination and delicate fancy! There was a noble prodigality in these outpourings; a generous disdain of self; an earnest desire to scatter abroad the seeds of wisdom and beauty, to take root wherever they might fall, and spring up without bearing his name or impress, which might remind the listener of the first days of poetry before it became individualized by the press, when the Homeric rhapsodist wandered through new-born cities and scattered hovels, flashing upon the minds of the wondering audience the bright train of heroic shapes, the series of godlike exploits, and sought no record more enduring than the fleshly tablets of his hearers' hearts; no memory but that of genial tradition; when copyright did not ascertain the reciter's property, nor marble at once perpetuate and shed chilliness on his fame;

"His bounty was as boundless as the sea,
His love as deep."

Like the ocean, in all its variety of gentle moods, his discourse perpetually ebbed and flowed—nothing in it angular, nothing of set purpose, but now trembling as the voice of divine philosophy, "not harsh nor crabbed, as dull fools suppose, but musical as is Apollo's lute," was wafted over the summer wave; now glistening in long line of light over some obscure subject, like the path of moonlight on the black water; and, if ever receding from the shore, driven by some sudden gust of inspiration, disclosing the treasures of the deep, like the rich strond in Spenser, "far-sunken in their sunless treasuries," to be covered anon by the foam of the same immortal tide. The benignity of his manner befitted the beauty of his disquisitions; his voice rose from the gentlest pitch of conversation to the height of impassioned eloquence without effort, as his language expanded from some common topic of the day to the loftiest abstractions; ascending by a winding track of spiral glory to the highest truths which the naked eye could discern, and suggesting starry regions beyond, which his own telescopic gaze might possibly decipher. If his entranced hearers often were unable to perceive the bearings of his argument—too mighty for any grasp but his own, and sometimes reaching beyond his own—they understood "a *beauty* in the words, if not the words;" and a wisdom and piety in the illustrations, even when unable to connect them with the idea which he desired to illustrate. If an entire scheme of moral philosophy was never developed by him either in speaking or writing, all the parts were great: vast biblical knowledge, though sometimes eddying in splendid conjecture, was always employed with pious reverence; the morality suggested was at once elevated and genial; the charity hoped all things; and the mighty imaginative reasoner seemed almost to realize the condition suggested by the great Apostle, "that he understood all mysteries and all knowledge, and spake with the tongues both of men and angels!"

After Coleridge had found his last earthly refuge, under the wise and generous care of Mr. Gilman, at Highgate, he rarely visited Lamb, and my opportunities of observing him ceased. From those who were more favoured, as well as from the fragments I have seen of his last effusions, I know that, amid suffering and weakness, his mighty mind concentrated its energies on the highest subjects which had

ever kindled them; that the speculations, which sometimes seemed like paradox, because their extent was too vast to be comprehended in a single grasp of intellectual vision, were informed by a serener wisdom; that his perceptions of the central truth became more undivided, and his piety more profound and humble. His love for Charles and Mary Lamb continued, to the last, one of the strongest of his human affections—of which, by the kindness of a friend,* I possess an affecting memorial under his hand, written in the margin of a volume of his "Sybilline Leaves," which, after his life-long habit, he has enriched by manuscript annotations. The poem, beside which it is inscribed, is entitled "The Lime-Tree Bower my Prison," composed by the poet in June, 1796, when Charles and Mary Lamb, who were visiting at his cottage near Bristol, had left him for a walk, which an accidental lameness prevented him from sharing. The visitors are not indicated by the poem, except that Charles is designated by the epithet, against which he jestingly remonstrated, as "gentle-hearted Charles;" and is represented as "winning his way, with sad and patient soul, through evil and pain, and strange calamity." Against the title is written as follows:

CH. & MARY LAMB,
dear to my heart, yea,
as it were, *my heart*,
S. T. C. Æt. 63. 1834.
1797
1834.

37 years

This memorandum, which is penned with remarkable neatness, must have been made in Coleridge's last illness, as he suffered acutely for several months before he died, in July of this same year, 1834. What a space did that thirty-seven years of fond regard for the brother and sister occupy in a mind like Coleridge's, peopled with immortal thoughts which might multiply in the true time, dialled in heaven, its minutes into years!

These friends of Lamb's whom I have ventured to sketch in companionship with him, and Southey also, whom I only once saw, are all gone, and others of less note in the world's eye have followed them. Among those of the old set who are gone is Manning, perhaps, next to Coleridge, the dear-

* Mr. Richard Welsh, of Reading, editor of the Berkshire Chronicle—*one of* the ablest productions of the Conservative Periodical Press.

est of them, whom Lamb used to speak of as marvellous in a *tête-à-tête*, but who, in company, seemed only a courteous gentleman, more disposed to listen than to talk. In good old age departed Admiral Burney, frank-hearted voyager with Captain Cook round the world, who seemed to unite our society with the circle over which Dr. Johnson reigned; who used to tell of school-days under the tutelage of Eugene Aram; how he remembered the gentle usher pacing the play-ground arm-in-arm with some one of the elder boys, and seeking relief from the unsuspected burthen of his conscience by talking of strange murders, and how he, a child, had shuddered at the handcuffs on his teacher's hands when taken away in the post-chaise to prison; the admiral being himself the centre of a little circle which his sister, the famous authoress of "Evelina," "Cecilia," and "Camilla" sometimes graced. John Lamb, the jovial and burly, who dared to argue with Hazlitt on questions of art; Barron Field, who, with veneration enough to feel all the despised greatness of Wordsworth, had a sparkling vivacity, and, connected with Lamb by the link of Christ's Hospital associations, shared largely in his regard; Rickman, the sturdiest of jovial companions, severe in the discipline of whist as at the table of the House of Commons, of which he was the principal clerk; and Alsager, so calm, so bland, so considerate — all are gone. These were all Temple guests, friends of Lamb's early days; but the companions of a later time, who first met in Great Russell-street, or Dalston, or Islington, or Enfield, have been woefully thinned: Allan Cunningham, stalwart of form and stout of heart and verse, a ruder Burns; Cary, Lamb's "pleasantest of clergymen," whose sweetness of disposition and manner would have prevented a stranger from guessing that he was the poet who had rendered the adamantine poetry of Dante into English with kindred power; Hood, so grave, and sad, and silent, that you were astonished to recognize in him the outpourer of a thousand wild fancies, the detector of the inmost springs of pathos, and the powerful vindicator of poverty and toil before the hearts of the prosperous; the Reverend Edward Irving, who, after fulfilling an old prophecy he made in Scotland to Hazlitt, that he would astonish and shake the world by his preaching, sat humbly at the feet of Coleridge to listen to wisdom—all are gone; the forms of others, associated with Lamb's circle by more accidental links (also dead), come thronging on the memory from the mist of years—

alas! it is easier to count those that are left of the familiar faces.

The story of the lives of Charles and Mary Lamb is now told; nothing more remains to be learned respecting it. The known collateral branches of their stock are extinct, and their upward pedigree lost in those humble tracks on which the steps of Time leave so light an impress, that the dust of a few years obliterates all trace, and affords no clew to search collaterally for surviving relatives. The world has, therefore, all the materials for judging of them which can be possessed by those who, not remembering the delightful peculiarities of their daily manners, can only form imperfect ideas of what they were. Before bidding them a last adieu, we may be allowed to linger a little longer, and survey their characters by the new and solemn lights which are now, for the first time, fully cast upon them.

Except to the few who were acquainted with the tragical occurrences of Lamb's early life, some of his peculiarities seemed strange—to be forgiven, indeed, to the excellences of his nature and the delicacy of his genius—but still, in themselves, as much to be wondered at as deplored. The sweetness of his character, breathed through his writings, was felt even by strangers, but its heroic aspect was unguessed even by many of his friends. Let them now consider it, and ask if the annals of self-sacrifice can show anything in human action and endurance more lovely than its self-devotion exhibits! It was not merely that he saw (which his elder brother cannot be blamed for not immediately perceiving) through the ensanguined cloud of misfortune which had fallen upon his family the unstained excellence of his sister, whose madness had caused it; that he was ready to take her to his own home with reverential affection, and cherish her through life; that he gave up, for her sake, all meaner and more selfish love, and all the hopes which youth blends with the passion which disturbs and ennobles it: not even that he did all this cheerfully, and without pluming himself upon his brotherly nobleness as a virtue, or seeking to repay himself (as some uneasy martyrs do) by small instalments of long repining, but that he carried the spirit of the hour in which he first knew and took his course to his last. So far from thinking that his sacrifice of youth and love to his sister gave him a license to follow his own caprice at the expense of her feelings, even in the lightest matters, he always wrote and spoke of her as his wiser self; his generous benefactress,

of whose protecting care he was scarcely worthy. How his pen almost grew wanton in her praise, even when she was a prisoner in the asylum after the fatal attack of lunacy, his letters of the time to Coleridge show; but that might have been a mere temporary exaltation—the attendant fervour of a great exigency and a great resolution. It was not so; nine years afterward (1805), in a letter to Miss Wordsworth, he thus dilates on his sister's excellences, and exaggerates his own frailties:

"To say all that I know of her would be more than I think anybody could believe or even understand; and when I hope to have her well again with me, it would be sinning against her feelings to go about to praise her; for I can conceal nothing that I do from her. She is older, and wiser, and better than I, and all my wretched imperfections I cover to myself by resolutely thinking on her goodness. She would share life and death, heaven and hell, with me. She lives but for me; and I know I have been wasting and teasing her life for five years past incessantly with my cursed ways of going on. But even in this upbraiding of myself I am offending against her, for I know that she has cleaved to me for better, for worse; and if the balance has been against her hitherto, it 'was a noble trade.'"

Let it also be remembered that this devotion of the entire nature was not exercised merely in the consciousness of a past tragedy, but during the frequent recurrences of the calamity which caused it, and the constant apprehension of its terrors; and this for a large portion of life, in poor lodgings, where the brother and sister were, or fancied themselves, "marked people;" where, from an income incapable of meeting the expense of the sorrow without sedulous privations, he contrived to hoard, not for holiday enjoyment or future solace, but to provide for expected distress. Of the misery attendant on this anticipation, aggravated by jealous fears lest some imprudence or error of his own should have hastened the inevitable evil, we have a glimpse in the letter to Miss Wordsworth above quoted, and which seems to have been written in reply to one which that excellent lady had addressed to Miss Lamb, and which had fallen into the brother's care during one of her sad absences.

"Your long kind letter has not been thrown away, but poor Mary, to whom it is addressed, cannot yet relish it. She has been attacked by one of her severe illnesses, and is at present *from home*. Last Monday week was the day she left me; and I hope I may calculate upon having her again in a month or little more. I am rather afraid late hours have, in this case, contributed to her indisposition. But when she begins to discover symptoms of approaching illness, it is not easy to say what is best to do. Being by ourselves is bad, and going out is bad. I get so irritable and wretched with fear, that I constantly hasten on the disorder. You cannot conceive the misery of such a foresight. I am sure that for the week before she left me I was little better than light-headed. I now am calm, but sadly taken down and flat. I have every reason to suppose that this illness, like all her former ones, will be but temporary. But I cannot always feel so. Meantime she is dead to me!"

The constant independency of this giant sorrow saddened to "the Lambs" even their holidays, as the journey which they both regarded as the relief and charm of the year was frequently followed by a seizure; and when they ventured to take it, a strait-waistcoat, carefully packed by Miss Lamb herself, was their constant companion. Sad experience at last induced the abandonment of the annual excursion, and Lamb was contented with walks in and near London during the interval of labour. Miss Lamb experienced, and full well understood, premonitory symptoms of the attack, in restlessness, low fever, and the inability to sleep; and, as gently as possible, prepared her brother for the duty he must soon perform; and thus, unless he could stave off the terrible separation till Sunday, obliged him to ask leave of absence from the office as if for a day's pleasure—a bitter mockery! On one occasion Mr. Charles Lloyd met them slowly pacing together a little footpath in Hoxton fields, both weeping bitterly, and found, on joining them, that they were taking their solemn way to the accustomed asylum!

Will any one acquainted with these secret passages of Lamb's history wonder that, with a strong physical inclination for the stimulus and support of strong drinks, which man is framed moderately to rejoice in, he should snatch some wild pleasure "between the acts" (as he called them) "*of his* distressful drama," and that, still more, during the

loneliness of the solitude created by his sister's absences, he should obtain the solace of an hour's feverish dream? That, notwithstanding that frailty, he performed the duties of his hard lot with exemplary steadiness and discretion is indeed wonderful, especially when it is recollected that he had himself been visited, when in the dawn of manhood, with his sister's malady, the seeds of which were lurking in his frame. While that natural predisposition may explain an occasional flightiness of expression on serious matters, fruit of some wayward fancy, which flitted through his brain, without disturbing his constant reason or reaching his heart, and some little extravagances of fitful mirth, how does it heighten the moral courage by which the disease was controlled and the severest duties performed! Never surely was there a more striking example of the power of a virtuous, rather say of a pious, wish to conquer the fiery suggestions of latent insanity than that presented by Lamb's history. Nervous, tremulous as he seemed—so slight of frame that he looked only fit for the most placid fortune—when the dismal emergencies which checkered his life arose, he acted with as much promptitude and vigour as if he had never penned a stanza nor taken a glass too much, or was strung with Herculean sinews. None of those temptations, in which misery is the most potent, to hazard a lavish expenditure for an enjoyment to be secured against fate and fortune, ever tempted him to exceed his income, when scantiest, by a shilling. He had always a reserve for poor Mary's periods of seclusion, and something in hand besides for a friend in need; and on his retirement from the India House, he had amassed, by annual savings, a sufficient sum (invested, after the prudent and classical taste of Lord Stowell, in "the elegant simplicity of the Three per Cents.") to secure comfort to Miss Lamb when his pension should cease with him, even if the India Company, his great employers, had not acted nobly by the memory of their inspired clerk—as they did—and gave her the annuity to which a wife would have been entitled, but of which he could not feel assured. Living among literary men, some less distinguished and less discreet than those whom we have mentioned, he was constantly importuned to relieve distresses which an improvident speculation in literature produces, and which the recklessness attendant on the empty vanity of self-exaggerated talent renders desperate and merciless; and to the importunities of such hopeless petitioners he gave too largely, though he used

sometimes to express a painful sense that he was diminishing his own store without conferring any real benefit. "Heaven," he used to say, "does not owe me sixpence for all I have given, or lent (as they call it) to such importunity; I only gave it because I could not bear to refuse it; and I have done good by my weakness." On the other hand, he used to seek out occasions for devoting a part of his surplus to those of his friends whom he believed it would really serve, and almost forced loans, or gifts in the disguise of loans, upon them. If he thought one in such a position would be the happier for £50 or £100, he would carefully procure a note for the sum, and, perhaps, for days before he might meet the object of his friendly purpose, keep the note in his waistcoat pocket, burning in it to be produced, and, when the occasion arrived—"in the sweet of the night"—he would crumple it up in his hand, and stammer out his difficulty of disposing of a little money: "I don't know what to do with it—pray take it—pray use it—you will do me a kindness if you will," he would say; and it was hard to disoblige him! Let any one who has been induced to regard Lamb as a poor, slight, excitable, and excited being, consider that such acts as these were not infrequent—that he exercised hospitality of a substantial kind, without stint, all his life—that he spared no expense for the comfort of his sister, *there* only lavish—and that he died leaving sufficient to accomplish all his wishes for survivors, and think what the sturdy quality of his goodness must have been amid all the heart-aches and head-aches of his life, and ask the virtue which has been supported by strong nerves whether it has often produced any good to match it?

The influence of the events now disclosed may be traced in the development and direction of Lamb's faculties and tastes, and in the wild contrasts of expression which sometimes startled strangers. The literary preferences disclosed in his early letters are often inclined to the superficial in poetry and thought—the theology of Priestley, though embraced with pious earnestness—the "divine chit-chat" of Cowper—the melodious sadness of Bowles; and his own style, breathing a graceful and modest sweetness, is without any decided character. But, by the terrible realities of his experience, he was turned to seek a kindred interest in the "sterner stuff" of old tragedy—to catastrophes more fearful even than his own—to the aspects of "pale passion" —*to shapes* of heroic daring and more heroic suffering—to

the agonizing contests of opposing affections, and the victories of the soul over calamity and death, which the old English drama discloses, and in the contemplation of which he saw his own suffering nature at once mirrored and exalted. Thus, instead of admiring, as he once admired, Rowe and Otway, even Massinger seemed too declamatory to satisfy him; in Ford, Decker, Marlowe, and Webster he found the most awful struggles of affection, and the "sad embroidery" of fancy-streaked grief, and expressed his kindred feelings in those little quintessences of criticism which are appended to the noblest scenes in his "Specimens;" and, seeking amid the sunnier and more varied world of Shakspeare for the profoundest and most earnest passion developed there, obtained that marvellous insight into the soul of Lear which gives to his presentment of its riches almost the character of creation. On the other hand, it was congenial pastime with him to revel in the opposite excellences of Beaumont and Fletcher, who changed the domain of tragedy into fairy-land; turned all its terror and its sorrow "to favour and to prettiness;" shed the rainbow hues of sportive fancy with equal hand among tyrants and victims, the devoted and the faithless, suffering and joy; represented the beauty of goodness as a happy accident, vice as a wayward aberration, and invoked the remorse of a moment to change them as with a harlequin's wand; unrealized the terrible, and left "nothing serious in mortality," but reduced the struggle of life to a glittering and heroic game to be played splendidly out, and quitted without a sigh. But neither Lamb's own secret griefs, nor the tastes which they nurtured, ever shook his faith in the requisitions of duty, or induced him to dally with that moral paradox to which near acquaintance with the great errors of mighty natures is sometimes a temptation. Never, either in writing or in speech, did he purposely confound good with evil. For the new theories of morals which gleamed out in the conversation of some of his friends, he had no sympathy; and, though in his boundless indulgence to the perversities and faults of those whom long familiarity had endeared to him, he did not suffer their frailties to impair his attachment to the individuals, he never palliated the frailties themselves, still less did he emblazon them as virtues.

No one acquainted with Lamb's story will wonder at the eccentric wildness of his mirth—his violent changes from the serious to the farcical—the sudden reliefs of the "heat-

oppressed brain," and heart weighed down by the sense of ever-impending sorrow. His whim, however, almost always bordered on wisdom. It was justly said of him by Hazlitt, "His serious conversation, like his serious writing, is his best. No one ever stammered out such fine, piquant, deep, eloquent things in half a dozen half sentences; his jests scald like tears, and he probes a question with a play on words."

Although Lamb's conversation vibrated between the intense and the grotesque, his writings are replete with quiet pictures of the humbler scenery of middle life, touched with a graceful and loving hand. We may trace in them the experience of a nature bred up in slender circumstances, but imbued with a certain innate spirit of gentility suggesting a respect for all its moderate appliances and unambitious pleasures. The same spirit pervaded all his own domestic arrangements, so that the intensity of his affliction was ameliorated by as much comfort as satisfaction in the outward furniture of life can give to slender fortune.

The most important light, however, shed on Lamb's intellectual life by a knowledge of his true history, is that which elucidates the change from vivid religious impressions, manifested in his earlier letters, to an apparent indifference towards immortal interests and celestial relations, which he confesses in a letter to Mr. Walter Wilson.* The truth is, not that he became an unbeliever, or even a skeptic, but that the peculiar disasters in which he was plunged, and the tendency of his nature to seek immediate solaces, induced an habitual reluctance to look boldly into futurity. That conjugal love, which anticipates with far-looking eye prolonged existence in posterity, was denied to his self-sacrifice; irksome labour wearied out the heart of his days; and over his small household, Madness, like Death in the vision of Milton, continually "shook its dart," and only, at the best, "delayed to strike." Not daring to look onward, even for a little month, he acquired the habitual sense of living entirely in the present; enjoying with tremulous zest the security of the moment, and making some genial but sad amends for the want of all the perspective of life by cleaving with fondness to its nearest objects, and becoming attached to them even when least interesting in themselves.

This perpetual grasping at transient relief from the minute and vivid present associated Lamb's affections inti-

* Page 396.

mately and closely with the small details of daily existence; these became to him the "jutting frieze" and "coigne of vantage" in which his home-bred fancy "made its bed and procreant cradle;" these became imbued with his thoughts, and echoed back to him old feelings and old loves, till his inmost soul shivered at the prospect of being finally wrenched from them. Enthralled thus in the prison of an earthly home, he became perplexed and bewildered at the idea of an existence which, though holier and happier, would doubtless be entirely different from that to which he was bound by so many delicate films of custom. "Ah!" he would say, "we shall have none of these little passages of this life hereafter—none of our little quarrels and makings-up—no questionings about sixpence at whist;" and, thus repelled, he clung more closely to "the bright minutes" which he strung "on the thread of keen domestic anguish!" It is this intense feeling of the "nice regards of flesh and blood"—this dwelling in petty felicities—which makes us, apart from religious fears, unwilling to die. Small associations make death terrible, because we know that, parting with this life, we part from their company; whereas great thoughts make death less fearful, because we feel that they will be our companions in all worlds, and link our future to our present being in all ages. Such thoughts assuredly were not dead in a heart like Lamb's; they were only veiled by the nearer presences of familiar objects, and sometimes, perhaps, bursting in upon him in all their majesty, produced those startling references to sacred things, in which, though not to be quoted with approval, there was no conscious profaneness, but rather a wayward, fitful, disturbed piety. If, indeed, when borne beyond the present, he sought to linger in the past; to detect among the dust and cobwebs of antiquity beauty which had lurked there from old time, rather than to "rest and expatiate in a life to come," no anti-Christian sentiment spread its chillness over his spirit. The shrinking into mortal life was but the weakness of a nature which shed the sweetness of the religion of its youth through the sorrows and the snatches of enjoyment which crowded his after years, and only feebly perceived its final glories, which, we may humbly hope, its immortal part is now enjoying.

Shortly before his death, Lamb had borrowed of Mr. Cary Phillips's "Theatrum Poetarum Anglicanorum," which, when returned by Mr. Moxon after the event, was found with the leaf folded down at the account of Sir Philip

Sydney. Its receipt was acknowledged by the following lines:

"So should it be, my gentle friend;
Thy leaf last closed at Sydney's end.
Thou too, like Sydney, wouldst have given
The water, thirsting and near heaven;
Nay, were it wine, fill'd to the brim,
Thou hadst looked hard, but given, like him.

And art thou mingled then among
Those famous sons of ancient song?
And do they gather round, and praise
Thy relish of their nobler lays?
Waxing in mirth to hear thee tell
With what strange mortals thou didst dwell;
At thy quaint sallies more delighted,
Than any's long among them lighted!

'Tis done: and thou hast joined a crew,
To whom thy soul was justly due;
And yet, I think, where'er thou be,
They'll scarcely love thee more than we."*

Little could any one, observing Miss Lamb in the habitual serenity of her demeanour, guess the calamity in which she had partaken, or the malady which frightfully checkered her life. From Mr. Lloyd, who, although saddened by impending delusion, was always found accurate in his recollection of long past events and conversations, I learned that she had described herself, on her recovery from the fatal attack, as having experienced, while it was subsiding, such a conviction that she was absolved in heaven from all taint of the deed in which she had been the agent—such an assurance that it was a dispensation of Providence for good, though so terrible—such a sense that her mother knew her entire innocence, and shed down blessings upon her, as though she had seen the reconcilement in solemn vision—that she was not sorely afflicted by the recollection. It was as if the old Greek notion of the necessity for the unconscious shedder of blood, else polluted though guiltless, to pass through a religious purification, had, in her case, been happily accomplished; so that not only was she without remorse, but without other sorrow than attends on the death of an infirm parent in a good old age. She never shrank from alluding to her mother when any topic connected with her own youth made such a reference, in ordinary respects, natural, but spoke of her as though no fearful remembrance was associated with the image; so that

* These lines, characteristic both of the writer and the subject, are copied from the Memoir of the translator of Dante, by his son, the Rev. Henry Cary, which, enriched by many interesting memorials of contemporaries, presents as valuable a picture of rare ability and excellence as ever was traced by the fine observation of filial love.

some of her most intimate friends, who knew of the disaster, believed that she had never become aware of her own share in its horrors. It is still more singular that, in the wanderings of her insanity, amid all the vast throngs of imagery she presented of her early days, this picture never recurred, or, if ever, not associated with shapes of terror.

Miss Lamb would have been remarkable for the sweetness of her disposition, the clearness of her understanding, and the gentle wisdom of all her acts and words, even if these qualities had not been presented in marvellous contrast with the distraction under which she suffered for weeks, latterly for months, in every year. There was no tinge of insanity discernible in her manner to the most observant eye; not even in those distressful periods when the premonitory symptoms had apprized her of its approach, and she was making preparations for seclusion. In all its essential sweetness, her character was like her brother's; while, by a temper more placid, a spirit of enjoyment more serene, she was enable to guide, to counsel, to cheer him, and to protect him on the verge of the mysterious calamity, from the depths of which she rose so often unruffled to his side. To a friend in any difficulty she was the most comfortable of advisers, the wisest of consolers. Hazlitt used to say that he never met with a woman who could reason, and had met with only one thoroughly reasonable—the sole exception being Mary Lamb. She did not wish, however, to be made an exception, to a general disparagement of her sex; for in all her thoughts and feelings she was most womanly, keeping under even undue subordination to her notion of a woman's province intellect of rare excellence, which flashed out when the restraints of gentle habit and humble manner were withdrawn by the terrible force of disease. Though her conversation in sanity was never marked by smartness of repartee, seldom rising beyond that of a sensible, quiet gentlewoman appreciating and enjoying the talents of her friends, it was otherwise in her madness. Lamb, in his letter to a female friend, announcing his determination to be entirely with her, speaks of her pouring out memories of all the events and persons of her younger days; but he does not mention, what I am able from repeated experiences to add, that her ramblings often sparkled with brilliant description and shattered beauty. She would fancy herself in the days of Queen Anne or George the First, and describe the brocaded dames and courtly manners, as though she had been bred among

them, in the best style of the old comedy. It was all broken and disjointed, so that the hearer could remember little of her discourse; but the fragments were like the jewelled speeches of Congreve, only shaken from their setting. There was sometimes even a vein of crazy logic running through them, associating things essentially most dissimilar, but connecting them by a verbal association in strange order. As a mere physical instance of deranged intellect, her condition was, I believe, extraordinary; it was as if the finest elements of mind had been shaken into fantastic combinations like those of a kaleidoscope; but not for the purpose of exhibiting a curious phenomenon of mental aberration are the aspects of her insanity unveiled, but to illustrate the moral force of gentleness by which the faculties that thus sparkled when restraining wisdom was withdrawn, were subjected to its sway in her periods of reason.

The following letter from Miss Lamb to Miss Wordsworth, on one of the chief external events of Lamb's history, the removal from the Temple to Covent Garden, will illustrate the cordial and womanly strain of her observation on the occurrences of daily life, and afford a good idea of her habitual conversation among her friends.

"My dear Miss Wordsworth,—Your kind letter has given us very great pleasure, the sight of your handwriting was a most welcome surprise to us. We have heard good tidings of you by all our friends who were so fortunate as to visit you this summer, and rejoice to see it confirmed by yourself. You have quite the advantage in volunteering a letter; there is no merit in replying to so welcome a stranger.

"We have left the Temple. I think you will be sorry to hear this. I know I have never been so well satisfied with thinking of you at Rydal Mount as when I could connect the idea of you with your own Grasmere Cottage. Our rooms were dirty and out of repair, and the inconveniences of living in chambers became every year more irksome, and so, at last, we mustered up resolution enough to leave the good old place, that so long had sheltered us, and here we are, living at a brazier's shop, No. 20, in Russell-street, Covent Garden, a place all alive with noise and bustle; Drury Lane Theatre in sight from our front, and Covent Garden from our back windows. The *hubbub* of the carriages returning from the play does not

annoy me in the least; strange that it does not, for it is quite tremendous. I quite enjoy looking out of the window, and listening to the calling up of the carriages, and the squabbles of the coachmen and link-boys. It is the oddest scene to look down upon; I am sure you would be amused with it. It is well I am in a cheerful place, or I should have many misgivings about leaving the Temple. I look forward with great pleasure to the prospect of seeing my good friend, Miss Hutchinson. I wish Rydal Mount, with all its inhabitants inclosed, were to be transplanted with her, and to remain stationary in the midst of Covent Garden.

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"Charles has had all his Hogarths bound in a book; they were sent home yesterday, and now that I have them altogether, and perceive the advantage of peeping close at them through my spectacles, I am reconciled to the loss of them hanging round the room, which has been a great mortification to me—in vain I tried to console myself with looking at our new chairs and carpets, for we have got new chairs, and carpets covering all over our two sitting-rooms; I missed my old friends, and could not be comforted—then I would resolve to learn to look out of the window, a habit I never could attain in my life, and I have given it up as a thing quite impracticable—yet when I was at Brighton last summer, the first week I never took my eyes off from the sea, not even to look in a book: I had not seen the sea for sixteen years. Mrs. M——, who was with us, kept her liking, and continued her seat in the window till the very last, while Charles and I played truants, and wandered among the hills, which we magnified into little mountains, and *almost as good as* Westmoreland scenery; certainly we made discoveries of many pleasant walks, which few of the Brighton visitors have ever dreamed of; for like as is the case in the neighbourhood of London, after the first two or three miles we were sure to find ourselves in a perfect solitude. I hope we shall meet before the walking faculties of either of us fail; you say you can walk fifteen miles with ease; that is exactly my stint, and more fatigues me; four or five miles every third or fourth day, keeping very quiet between, was all Mrs. M—— could accomplish.

"God bless you and yours. Love to all and each one.

"I am ever yours most affectionately, M. Lamb."

Of that deeper vein of sentiment in Mary Lamb, seldom

revealed, the following passages from a letter to the same lady, referring to the death of a brother of her beloved correspondent, may be offered as a companion specimen.

"My dear Miss Wordsworth,—I thank you, my kind friend, for your most comfortable letter; till I saw your own handwriting, I could not persuade myself that I should do well to write to you, though I have often attempted it; but I always left off dissatisfied with what I had written, and feeling that I was doing an improper thing to intrude upon your sorrow. I wished to tell you that you would one day feel the kind of peaceful state of mind and sweet memory of the dead, which you so happily describe as now almost begun; but I felt that it was improper, and most grating to the feelings of the afflicted, to say to them that the memory of their affection would in time become a constant part, not only of their dream, but of their most wakeful sense of happiness. That you would see every object with and through your lost brother, and that that would at last become a real and everlasting source of comfort to you, I felt, and well knew, from my own experience in sorrow; but till you yourself began to feel this, I did not dare tell you so; but I send you some poor lines which I wrote under this conviction of mind, and before I heard Coleridge was returning home. I will transcribe them now, before I finish my letter, lest a false shame prevent me then, for I know they are much worse than they ought to be, written, as they were, with strong feeling, and on such a subject; every line seems to me to be borrowed, but I had no better way of expressing my thoughts, and I never have the power of altering or amending anything I have once laid aside with dissatisfaction.

"Why is he wandering on the sea?
Coleridge should now with Wordsworth be.
By slow degrees he'd steal away
Their woe, and gently bring a ray
(So happily he'd time relief)
Of comfort from their very grief.
He'd tell them that their brother dead,
When years have passed o'er their head,
Will be remembered with such holy,
True, and perfect melancholy,
That ever this lost brother John
Will be their heart's companion.
His voice they'll always hear,
His face they'll always see:
There's nought in life so sweet
As such a memory."

The excellence of Mary Lamb's nature was happily developed in her portion of those books for children—"wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best"—which she wrote in conjunction with her brother, the "Poetry for Children," the "Tales from Shakspeare," and "Mrs. Leicester's School." How different from the stony nutriment provided for those delicate, apprehensive, affectionate creatures in the utilitarian books, which starve their little hearts, and stuff their little heads with shallow science, and impertinent facts, and selfish morals! One verse, which she did not print—the conclusion of a little poem supposed to be expressed in a letter by the son of a family who, when expecting the return of its father from sea, received news of his death—recited by her to Mr. Martin Burney, and retained in his fond recollection, may afford a concluding example of the healthful wisdom of her lessons:

"I can no longer fain to be
A thoughtless child in infancy;
I tried to write like young Marie,
But I am James her brother;
And I can feel—but she's too young—
Yet blessings on her prattling tongue,
She sweetly soothes my mother."

Contrary to Lamb's expectation, who feared (as also his friends feared with him) the desolation of his own survivorship, which the difference of age rendered probable, Miss Lamb survived him for nearly eleven years. When he died she was mercifully in a state of partial estrangement, which, while it did not wholly obscure her mind, deadened her feelings, so that, as she gradually regained her perfect senses, she felt as gradually the full force of the blow, and was the better able calmly to bear it. For a while she declined the importunities of her friends that she would leave Edmonton for a residence nearer London, where they might more frequently visit her. *He* was there, asleep in the old church-yard, beneath the turf near which they had stood together, and had selected for a resting-place: to this spot she used, when well, to stroll out mournfully in the evening, and to this spot she would contrive to lead any friend who came in the summer evenings to drink tea and went out with her afterward for a walk.* At length, as her ill-

* The following sonnet, by Mr. Moxon, written at this period of tranquil sadness in Miss Lamb's life, so beautifully embodies the reverential love with which the sleeping and mourning were regarded by one of their nearest friends, that I gratify myself by extracting it from the charming little volume of his sonnets which it adorns:

Here sleeps, beneath this bank, where daisies grow,
The kindliest sprite earth holds within her breast;

ness became more frequent, and her frame much weaker, she was induced to take up her abode, under genial care, at a pleasant house in St. John's Wood, where she was surrounded by the old books and prints, and was frequently visited by her reduced number of surviving friends. Repeated attacks of her malady weakened her mind, but she retained to the last her sweetness of disposition unimpaired, and gently sunk into death on the 20th of May, 1847.

A few survivors of the old circle, now sadly thinned, attended her remains to the spot in Edmonton church-yard, where they were laid above those of her brother. With them was one friend of later days—but who had become to Lamb as one of his oldest companions, and for whom Miss Lamb cherished a strong regard—Mr. John Forster, the author of "The Life of Goldsmith," in which Lamb would have rejoiced, as written in a spirit congenial with his own. In accordance with Lamb's own feeling, so far as it could be gathered from his expressions on a subject to which he did not often or willingly refer, he had been interred in a deep grave, simply dug and wattled round, but without any affectation of stone or brickwork to keep the human dust from its kindred earth. So dry, however, is the soil of the quiet church-yard that the excavated earth left perfect walls of stiff clay, and permitted us just to catch a glimpse of the still untarnished edges of the coffin in which all the mortal part of one of the most delightful persons who ever lived was contained, and on which the remains of her he had loved with love "passing the love of woman" were henceforth to rest—the last glances we shall ever have even of that covering—concealed from us as we parted by the coffin of the sister. We felt, I believe, after a moment's strange shuddering, that the reunion was well accomplished; and although the true-hearted son of Admiral Burney, who had known and loved the pair we quitted from a child, and who had been among the dearest objects

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In such a spot I would this frame should rest;
When I to join my friend far hence shall go.
His only mate is now the minstrel lark,
Who chants her morning music o'er his bed,
Save she who comes each evening, ere the bark
Of watch-dog gathers drowsy folds, to shed
A sister's tears. Kind Heaven, upon her head,
Do thou in dove-like guise thy Spirit pour,
And in her aged path some flowrets spread
Of earthly joy, should Time for her in store
Have weary days and nights, ere she shall greet
Him whom she longs in Paradise to meet.

of existence to him, refused to be comforted, even he will now join the scanty remnant of their friends in the softened remembrance that "they were lovely in their lives," and own with them the consolation of adding, at last, "that in death they are not divided!"

END OF VOL. I.